

# PEOPLE, PRINCES AND PARAMOUNT POWER

Society and Politics in the  
Indian Princely States



Edited by  
**Robin Jeffrey**



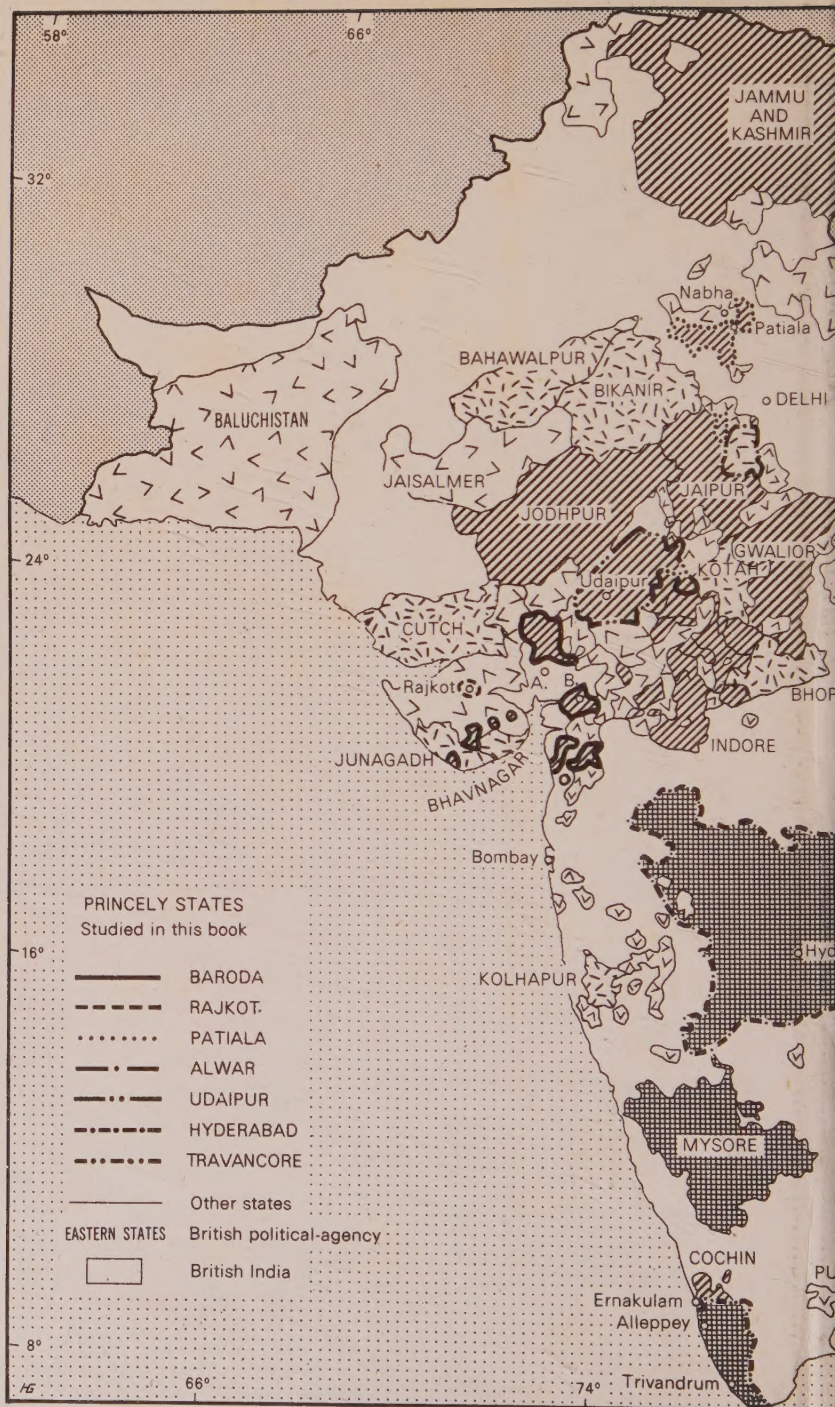
The Indian Princely States accounted for nearly one-third of pre-1947 India. This work, as the first scholarly symposium to focus on them, is eloquent testimony to the acute academic neglect they have suffered.

Striving to demythologize the States, the book portrays them as distinctive arenas in which the rules of politics and political behaviour were often very different from those in British India.

The thirteen contributions in this work include an Introduction setting the States in a historical perspective and case studies of political behaviour and bureaucratic innovation in Alwar, Baroda, Hyderabad, Mewar, Patiala, Rajkot and Travancore. The five concluding general chapters range from an analysis of the Indian Political Service to a study of the princes as post-independence politicians.

The book provides rich and varied fare for the student of history and politics, and much of comparative significance to students of traditional rule elsewhere in Asia and Africa.

Dr Robin Jeffrey was until recently Research Fellow in the South Asian History Section, The Australian National University, Canberra.

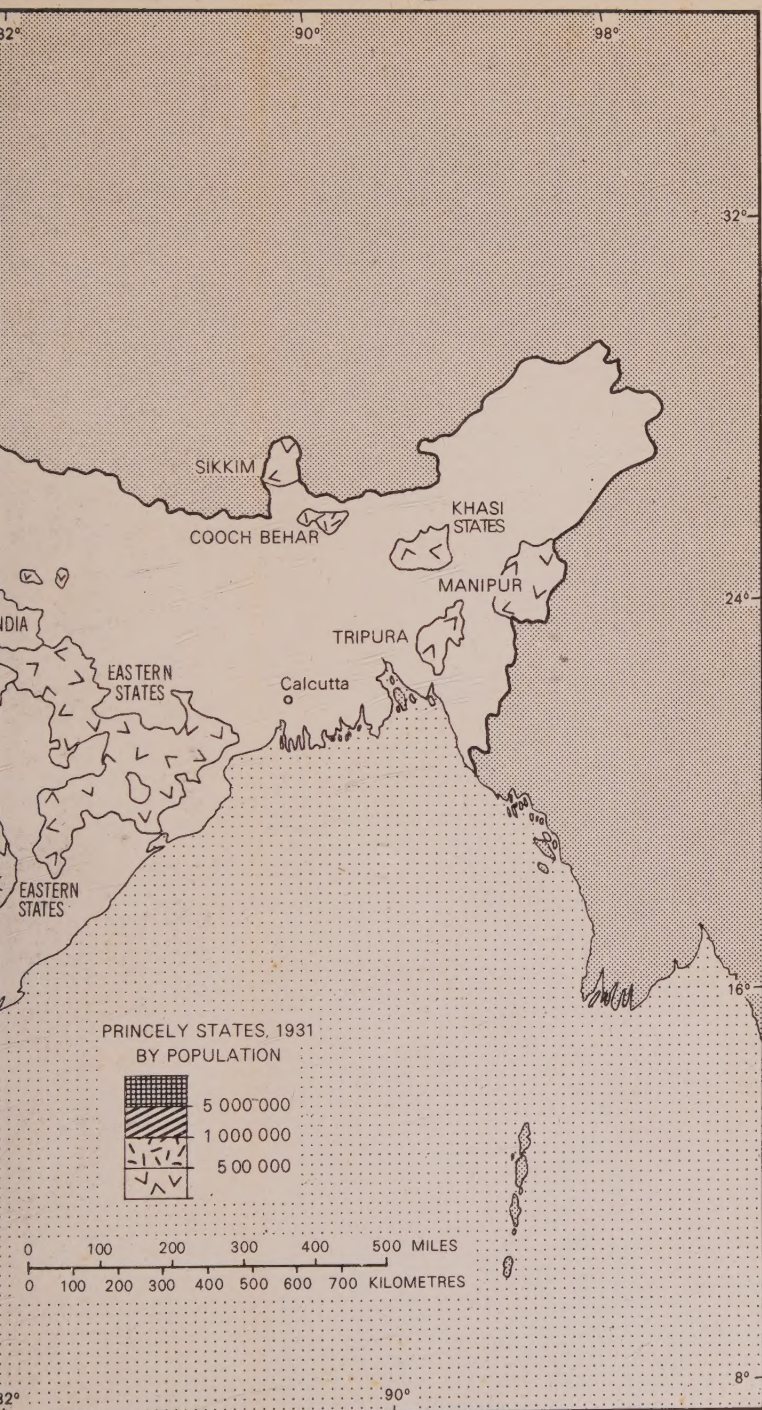




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# Preface

The contributors owe a great debt to archivists and librarians on four continents. The majority of us are especially indebted to the custodians of archives and offices in the mofussil towns of India where so many of the records of the princely states lie. Until recently, doubts about the existence of sources in the former states have discouraged scholars from attempting to work there. Our experience has been that these doubts are ill-founded. Our visits to record offices in Patiala, Bikanir, Jaipur, Baroda, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Cochin and Trivandrum have proved very fruitful. Indeed, in some cases the princely states—because they were self-contained administrations—generated more documentary records than comparable areas of British India.

As editor I have dealt arbitrarily with the problem of italicization and spelling of non-English words. I hope in doing so that I have not annoyed my co-authors or our readers too greatly. I have not used diacritical marks, and I have italicized only the least common Indian words. The Glossary, I hope, makes the style clear. In one case, too, I have allowed two different spellings to coexist in the book: in Hyderabad, the Nizam's minister was invariably written of as a Diwan with an 'i', in Travancore, the minister was a Dewan with an 'e'. I have left the choice of spelling to the preference of each contributor.

Plans for this book were first discussed in January 1974. In the long process of pulling together contributions from writers based in India, Britain, North America and Australia, we have become greatly indebted to the administrative stamina of Peg Carron, as efficient and good-natured a Dewan as ever presided over a catcherry. I am also very grateful for the help of May McKenzie and Beverly Ricketts.

ROBIN JEFFREY





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# Contributors

ROBIN JEFFREY is a research fellow in the Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.

EDWARD S. HAYNES is visiting scholar in South Asian Studies. Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York.

KAREN LEONARD is an assistant professor in the Program in Comparative Cultures, University of California, Irvine.

DAVID HARDIMAN is a research fellow at the Centre for Regional Development Studies, Surat, Gujarat.

BARBARA N. RAMUSACK is an associate professor of history at the University of Cincinnati.

RAJAT K. RAY is a lecturer in history at Presidency College, Calcutta.

JOHN R. WOOD is an assistant professor of political science at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

IAN COPLAND is a lecturer in history at Monash University, Melbourne.

JAMES MANOR is a lecturer in politics at the University of Leicester, England.

WILLIAM L. RICHTER is an associate professor of political science at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

ROBERT W. STERN teaches politics at Macquarie University, Sydney.

D. A. LOW is vice-chancellor of the Australian National University, Canberra.

# Abbreviations

CR/CRR	Crown Representative [Records], India Office Library and Records, London
GOI	Government of India
H. Poll	Home Political Department, Government of India
IOL/IOR	India Office Library and Records, London
NAI	National Archives of India, New Delhi
NML	Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi
P.	Papers



# Glossary

- ahimsa* non-violence
- avarna* Hindus of 'unclean' or polluting castes
- bandh* **strike, closure**
- bhakti* cult of devotion or faith
- bigha* a measurement of area
- crore* 10,000,000
- dacoit* bandit
- darbar* the executive government of a princely state; also, a public audience or reception
- darshan* glimpse of a great or revered figure
- Dewan/Diwan* the chief minister of an Indian prince
- dharma* moral duty
- dharna* a form of Hindu protest; the protester often fasts in front of the house of the man who he claims has wronged him
- fa'el zamin* a bond guaranteeing the authority of a family over an area of land; especially the agreements made by the British with dozens of local land-controllers in western India in the early nineteenth century
- gaddi* the throne—literally, the cushion—of an Indian prince
- gurdwara* a Sikh place of worship
- guru* a spiritual teacher
- harijan* literally, 'people of God'; word coined by Gandhi for untouchables
- hartal* closing of shops as a mark of political protest
- hijrat* migration from a (usually oppressive) ruler's territory
- himsa* killing, violence
- ijara* tax-farming
- izzat* honour
- jagir, jagirdar* a grant of land usually made by a raja to a noble in exchange for service; one who holds such a grant
- jatha* a band; an organized group of men
- jati* an endogamous subcaste
- khadi* homespun cloth popularized by Gandhi

- Khalsa* state-owned or controlled; also, in the case of the Sikhs, the Sikh community
- kisan* farmer, peasant
- lakh 100,000
- mahajan* money-lender
- mansab, mansabdar* an hereditary stipend paid regularly by the state; the recipients of such stipends
- misal* name given to the 11 large bands or armies into which the Sikh community organized itself in the mid-eighteenth century
- munsiff* a civil judge of a subordinate court
- panchayat* a village council
- Panth* the Sikh community
- parshad* food blessed and distributed by a priest
- patel, Patel* a village headman; also, an honorific frequently taken as a name by the Patidars of Gujarat
- Praja Mandal* literally, People's Organization; the name often taken by bodies inspired by the Indian National Congress and formed in the princely states in the 1930s and 1940s
- ryot* peasant, subject
- ryotwari* land settlement made between the government and individual tillers of the soil
- sabha* assembly, organization
- samiti* committee
- savarna* Hindus of 'clean' castes
- serrishtadar, sheristadar* head official of a court or office; chief factotum
- swadeshi* locally produced; applied especially to Indian goods as opposed to British imports
- tahsildar/tehsildar* revenue official presiding over a tahsil, a subdivision of a district in the British Indian administration
- talukdar/taluqdar* revenue official presiding over a taluk/taluq; more commonly, in the United Provinces, a large landholder
- thakur* a noble, usually a Rajput
- vakil* lawyer, agent
- zamindar* landlord, landholder
- zenana* the area of a house or palace where the women are secluded

# Introduction

ROBIN JEFFREY

## I

In the writing of South Asian history since independence, scholars have devoted much attention to the details of, and the debate over, how the British came to leave. The preoccupation is natural: India was the great watershed of decolonization. To discover what happened there, and how it happened, would be directly relevant, it appeared, to other parts of the world in the 1950s and 1960s. In its most popular form, moreover, the story was a spectacular one: Gandhi, the tiny, half-clad holyman, and his disciples of non-violence, undermining an empire.

Detailed studies, however, have tempered the popular view and have also led to increasing use of another set of questions: not how the British came to leave, but how they managed to stay so long. How did they maintain support? Who were their allies? And then, by extension, what were the vital shifts in allegiance that made their position untenable by 1947? Was their departure in fact more dependent on events in Europe than in India?

Even these questions about the nature of British power have, however, concentrated on areas of direct British rule and have largely overlooked the most obvious and ostentatious bulwark of all: the two-fifths of South Asia ruled by semi-independent princes allied to the British Crown.<sup>1</sup> From the early nineteenth century, when the East India Company began to consolidate its rule, until the 1930s, when conservatives in Britain and India were striving to maintain the British hold in its Victorian purity, the princes were often seen as one of the most useful props of the empire. Elphinstone in 1832 valued them as graphic examples for the people of British India of the bad old days :

It appears to me to be our interest as well as our duty to use every means to preserve the allied Governments. Their territories afford a refuge to all those whose habits of war, intrigue or depredation make them incapable of remaining quiet in ours; and the contrast of their Government has a favourable effect on our subjects, who, while they feel the evils they are actually exposed to, are apt to forget the greater ones from which they have been delivered.<sup>2</sup>



Lytton, viceroy in the 1870s, aimed 'to rally [the princes] openly round the throne . . . and identify [their] sympathies and interests with British rule.' This would 'strengthen very materially the power . . . of Your Majesty's Indian Empire', and help counteract the growing influence of 'the Baboos, whom we have educated to write semi-seditious articles in the Native Press . . .'.<sup>3</sup> As the danger from 'the Baboos' increased, the Government of India under Minto, inspired by his Political Secretary, Harcourt Butler, declared a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the states in 1909. Citing the 'dastardly crimes' recently committed in British India 'under the plea of political expediency', Minto told the princes that 'the precautions they have taken to bar the entrance of sedition into their possessions have added still further to the many proofs they have given in past years of their devotion and loyalty to the Crown.'<sup>4</sup> The general instructions in the new 'Political Manual' decreed that, in future, there should be no interference in internal affairs of the states except in the event of misrule 'which violates the elementary laws of civilization'.<sup>5</sup> The First World War and the support rendered by the princes reinforced this view. Later, after the passage of the Government of India Act in 1935, conservative forces, notably Churchill, saw the princes as an instrument for thwarting the federation proposals and thereby maintaining British power at the centre.<sup>6</sup> And as late as 1946-7, there were accusations that some British politicians and administrators nursed a hope that the princes might be maintained as a third force, and a base of British influence, after independence.<sup>7</sup>

Although the princes were thus regarded as bulwarks of British rule, their states have so far commanded little serious attention from historians. This volume is a first attempt to remedy that situation. Included here are seven studies of various social and political phenomena in specific states, and five more general papers. The first of these latter five analyses the attitudes and performance of the Indian Political Service; the second argues that the fate of the princes was sealed well before the so-called climactic years of 1946-9; the third studies the role of the princes as democratic politicians since independence; the fourth analyses the nature of politics in princely areas generally; finally, Anthony Low's 'Afterword' contrasts the nature of 'indirect rule' as it developed in the Indian princely states with 'indirect rule' in Africa, where traditional rulers exercised a more commanding influence after inde-

pendence than their Indian equivalents.

The studies of individual states in effect examine the social bases of princely rule: if the princes were a support of the British, how did the princes support themselves? Even if one accepts the popular, elephants-and-dancing-girls picture of the princely states, an appreciation of 'politics' in its wider sense compels one to ask who owned the elephants and who provided the dancing girls—and for whom. The following chapters dispel any notion that until the arrival of nationalism from British India in the 1930s, there were 'no politics' in the states. Having resources for disposal, princes also had rivals for their gaddis and their favours; their subjects, like subjects elsewhere, were on the alert to protect or enhance their material and ritual interests. But the ways in which subjects transacted political business with a princely raj—and the pregnant issues in such a raj—might differ strikingly from those of British India.

This introduction first looks briefly at the historical origins of the states, and then examines some of the popular notions about the states which the chapters that follow tend either to confirm or disprove. Finally, it attempts to point up some of the major comparisons between the states—structures, processes or events common to all or most.

## II

What was the origin of the states? Much stress has been laid on their artificiality, their fly-in-amber quality. Yet initially it was the fact that the states were vigorous traditional rulerships that preserved them.

For an understanding of so much of South Asian history of the last 300 years, the idea of the 'chiefdom' or 'little kingdom' must be the starting point.<sup>8</sup> The British brought bureaucracy, and later railways and the telegraph; the boundaries of the 'little kingdoms' were stretched and eventually shattered. But in the eighteenth century when the East India Company began to involve itself in local wars and politics, the basis of Indian politics was a geographically circumscribed area of a few dozen villages scattered over a few dozen square miles, from which one man or one family could effectively extract the surplus produced by the land. The area that one chief could control would vary. Geography imposed one sort of restriction: the rivers subdividing Malabar created a different situation from that in the deserts of Rajasthan or on the Gangetic Plain.

The vigour and ability of individuals imposed another: a strong father, able to push his authority to its geographical limit, might be succeeded by a foolish or a sickly son who would lose it all. The weak were soon swept away, and the boundaries and relationships among the 'little kingdoms' shifted ceaselessly.

The 'rulers' might be called by various titles—*raja*, *talukdar*, *jagirdar*, etc.—but in essence they were of two types. The first were those who had emerged from local society, whose relatives were in the villages they controlled, and who had established themselves as the link between their locality and whatever suzerain might seek to collect taxes from it. The second type were those who came as outsiders to whom the revenue collection had been assigned by a superior power. To begin with, the new tax farmer or 'governor' had to conquer, or come to terms with, the local families who had performed this function in the past.<sup>9</sup> The newcomers might settle in the area, and in a generation or two become as locally based as the families they supplanted. Similarly, the new family would become subject to supplantation as invaders moved through the country and suzerain powers rose and fell. This was not, however, a one-way process, and it was possible for a local man to conquer, or extract submission from, his neighbours.<sup>10</sup>

Using Cohn as a guide,<sup>11</sup> one may suggest a simplified model of four levels of rulership in the eighteenth century:

1. The locality or 'little kingdom'.
2. The *raja*, who might extract revenue from a number of 'little kingdoms'.
3. The *Dewani* governments, like those of Oudh, Bengal and Hyderabad, which linked the *raja*-doms to the Mughal empire.
4. The Mughal empire itself.

Such a typology can only be a general guide. *Rajas* could have direct relationships with the Mughal emperor; rulers of 'little kingdoms' could undermine *rajas* and put themselves in their place. But the typology is useful, for it allows us to see how the East India Company fitted into this system, how it climbed the rungs of the ladder until ultimately in 1858 it supplanted the Mughal emperor, and how—most important for our purposes here—the princely states came to be preserved as such a crazy patchwork of great and small.

Akbar's empire was at its height when the East India Company received its charter in 1600. By 1647 the Company had twenty-



three trading posts, or factories, on the Indian coast.<sup>12</sup> It had acquired sovereignty over tiny areas around Madras and Bombay by 1665, but it was not until the 1690s that it began to be assimilated into the Indian political system.<sup>13</sup> The example of Bengal is clearest. Already conducting a factory, the Company in 1698 was granted the zamindari rights to three villages on the site of the present city of Calcutta.<sup>14</sup> The Company now stood on the first rung of the ladder: the ruler of a 'little kingdom', which paid its annual tribute to its immediate superior, the *faujdar* of Hughli. The Company's power grew, and after the Battle of Plassey in 1757, it received the rights to the 24 Parganas, and paid revenue directly to the Nawab of Bengal, the Mughal viceroy. In 1765, after the Battle of Baksar, it reached the third rung when it assumed the Dewani of Bengal.

The process of the Company's rise was similar to that of Indian rulers in the past. The crucial difference was that the Company brought with it a disciplined bureaucracy which was new to India and which gave it advantages no Indian power possessed.<sup>15</sup> The Company had continuity. Its bureaucracy ensured unchallenged successions to important offices and an obedient chain of command. These were the strengths of both its civil and military authority. After Plassey and Baksar, the Company emerged as the foremost—but by no means the only—military power in India. The treaties of alliance, which led to the preservation of the princely order, spring from this time.

A number of the states with which the Company had to deal had gone some way towards creating centralized governments. Maharaja Martanda Varma of Travancore, for example, had embarked on a series of conquests from the 1730s which extended his 'little kingdom' from Cape Comorin 170 miles north to Cochin. In the course of these campaigns, he killed or dispossessed the rulers of 'little kingdoms' that stood in his way and imported literate Tamil Brahmins as his officials. When Travancore got a British Resident in 1800, the old nobility had already lost much of its political power. Mysore was similar: Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan had destroyed the old rulers, and these were not reinstated when the British handed the state over to a Hindu prince in 1799. In many other states, however, the power of the ruler had not been so clearly established by the time he came into 'subsidiary alliance' with the Company. In these states, the raja depended for most of his troops and much of his influence on his *jagirdars*, who received hereditary grants of

villages and their revenue, in return for providing soldiers. Often, as in the case of Alwar, these *jagirdars* were the raja's kinsmen and potential rivals. From a raja's point of view, an alliance with the British which guaranteed protection (whether against external foes or internal uprisings) offered a way of limiting his dependence on his *jagirdars*. In *jagirdari* states, like Alwar, Hyderabad and Jaipur, the contest between the raja, his nobility and the British-inspired bureaucracy was to figure prominently over the next 150 years.

From the 1760s, the Company began to conclude treaties of 'subsidiary alliance' with Indian rulers, rulers who, though militarily weaker, were theoretically the Company's political equals. There had been treaties with local powers since 1730, but these had been with coastal rulers for commercial purposes and the suppression of piracy.<sup>16</sup> The first treaty by which the Company agreed to furnish its well-trained troops in exchange for an annual subsidy was concluded with the Nizam of Hyderabad, an over-weening viceroy of the Mughal emperor, in 1766.<sup>17</sup> Similar treaties followed with Oudh, Cooch Behar and the Nawab of the Carnatic.<sup>18</sup>

As they were later to do with such incalculable effect when they began to codify law, the British were, in their attempt to define, formalize and preserve existing relationships, creating a new system. Although there were occasions when they violated agreements with Indian rulers, treaties were generally honoured. There were practical, as well as moral reasons. Arthur Wellesley wrote in 1804 of the value of 'our credit for scrupulous good faith. . . . What brought me through many difficulties in the war, and the negotiations of peace? The British good faith and nothing else.'<sup>19</sup> Thus, treaties made in the 1770–1800 period with powers that were then formidable were not abrogated later when those powers had become insignificant. In former times such rulers would have been swept away by more vigorous challengers; but for the British to have done so would have made it difficult to conclude similar money-saving treaties with powers on the new frontiers. It took nearly a hundred years—from the assumption of the 24 Parganas in 1757 to the deposition of the King of Oudh in 1856—for the Company to establish its dominance over the whole of India. In the course of that long voyage, many barnacles fastened to the hull of the ship of state.

The subsidiary system was the basis of the Company's policy

throughout the wars with Haidar Ali, Tipu Sultan and the Marathas in the 1770–1800 period. However, it was the coming of Lord Wellesley as Governor-General, and his determination to build a British empire in India, that created the grandiose and ramshackle structure of what was later to be known as ‘princely India’. Wellesley was a man in a hurry. If it was easier to neutralize a local ruler with a treaty than a siege-train, Wellesley and his agents concluded a treaty and passed quickly on to more difficult problems. As Wellesley’s Accountant-General observed, ‘Lord Wellesley was for firing off . . . treaties at every man with a blunderbuss.’<sup>20</sup> In the seven years Wellesley was Governor-General, Aitchison records about 100 treaties.<sup>21</sup>

There was an awesome arbitrariness about who got a treaty and who did not. The Zamorin of Calicut, whose family’s rule stretched back hundreds of years, was turned into a landlord; yet Tipu Sultan’s Mysore, conquered in 1799, was made over to the relation of a Hindu family which had once ruled a small portion of the new state. Much depended on the value of the country. The Zamorin’s Malabar was rich pepper country; much of Mysore was dry and unprosperous. Similarly, when Nagpur was overrun in 1818, the Company restored its ruler, but annexed territories worth Rs 24 lakhs annually in revenue, the richest part of the state.<sup>22</sup>

For a man with a blunderbuss, there was room for manoeuvre. Bhopal, for example, had been a tributary of Gwalior, but in 1814 slipped away to become a subsidiary ally of the Company.<sup>23</sup> In Kathiawar from 1803–7, and in Rajputana in 1808, local rulers leapt at the opportunity to become clients of the British and thereby escape the exactions of the Marathas. Kathiawar became the most crazy-quilted area of princely India, as every local land-controller—from parvenu adventurer to descendants of ancient ruling families—became a ‘raja’ if he signed the *fae’l zamin* bonds of 1807.<sup>24</sup> Various Maratha chiefs too were ready to make deals with the Company to resolve their local struggles, and the Company for its part was happy to guarantee the security of upstarts as a way of weakening more formidable suzerains. Having encouraged the raja of Kolhapur to assert his independence of the Peshwa, the Company next encouraged the *jagirdars* of both Kolhapur and the Peshwa to assert their independence of their overlords.<sup>25</sup> Whether a tributary raja or petty land-controller brought off an agreement with the Company depended on the character of the Company’s negotiator, the size of



the blunderbuss the raja appeared to have, the revenue value of the country, the forces the British had available, and the urgency with which they wished to resolve matters in the area.<sup>26</sup> If a chief failed to get a treaty one year, by the next he may well have been swept away. Ironically, if he got a treaty, his family stood a good chance of ruling for the next 150 years.

About 600 'states'—the exact number depends on one's definition—survived into the twentieth century, but the majority of these were tiny and insignificant. Only 284 states were important enough to qualify for privy purses from the Government of India after integration in 1947–9. Much has been written about the status that rulers attached to military salutes from the British Government, but only 83 states received salutes of 11 guns or more. The 24 states receiving salutes of 17 guns or more accounted for more than seventy per cent of the population of the states and about 27 per cent of their area. The five 21-gun states—Hyderabad, Gwalior, Mysore, Kashmir and Baroda—had a combined population in 1931 of more than thirty million, out of a total states' population of about seventy million. (See Appendix for a list of the salute states entitled to 11 guns or more).

The aim of the East India Company in treating with the princes in the pre-1820 period was to bring a tranquil, pacified India under its control. There was nothing idealistic in this. All imperial powers desire peace within their territories and on their borders. Moreover, as a commercial enterprise, ever mindful of its balance sheet, the East India Company was more concerned than most imperialists about the importance of short-term profits. Anarchy was bad for business, and to suppress it, war might be necessary. But peace was preferable to both; it was cheaper. Providing a chief did not wage war against the Company or plunder his neighbours, he could, so Company officers thought, be safely left to himself, and the Company could safely go about its business of extracting Indian wealth and attempting to show a profit. The need for reliable, orderly governments, and the incentive to the Company to try to promote such governments, was stated by the Anjengo factors in southern Kerala in 1723. Deploring the unreliability of local chiefs who constantly defied their titular rulers, the factors lamented that if 'the Kings will get the full power in their hands . . . then the Company will enjoy a free and full trade. . . .'<sup>27</sup> It is not surprising that Maharaja Martanda Varma, who forged the state of Travancore

out of the unruly chieftaincies of southern Kerala from the 1730s, did so with the encouragement and help of the East India Company.

The princely map was largely settled in 1818–20 after the Third Maratha War. The Peshwa and some lesser chiefs in western and central India were removed, but Nagpur, Indore and Gwalior were preserved. Only Oudh, the Punjab kingdom of Ranjit Singh, and Sind remained to be conquered. But to impose peace was not to solve the problem of the Indian rulers for all time. In guaranteeing the security of princes, the Company was radically altering the system under which Indian rulers at all levels had traditionally lived. In a famous passage written in 1817, Thomas Munro outlined 'the many weighty objections' to the system of 'subsidiary alliance':

It has a natural tendency to render the Government of every country in which it exists weak and oppressive; to extinguish all honourable spirit among the higher classes of society, and to degrade and impoverish the whole people. The usual remedy of a bad Government in India is a quiet revolution in the palace or a violent one by rebellion, or foreign conquests. But the presence of a British force cuts off every chance of remedy, by supporting the prince on the throne against every foreign and domestic enemy. It renders him indolent, by teaching him to trust to strangers for his security; and cruel and avaricious, by showing him that he has nothing to fear from the hatred of his subjects.<sup>28</sup>

There appear to have been two developments in the wake of firm and obvious peace: British expectations of princely administration rose, while the effectiveness of those administrations in fact declined, much as Munro had suggested it would. By the 1840s most of the major states had found themselves deeply in trouble with their British suzerains. Mysore was taken under direct British rule in 1831 (to be restored to an Indian ruler fifty years later). Coorg was annexed in 1834, Mandvi in 1839, Kolaba and Jaloun in 1840 and Surat in 1842. In Gwalior, the army of 40,000 rose in revolt during a minority and had to be engaged and defeated by Company troops in 1843. Oudh, Hyderabad, Travancore, Baroda and Indore were all badly managed and in grave disfavour in the 1840s.<sup>29</sup>

William Lee-Warner argued that there was a coherent British policy towards the states in the period from 1820 to the Revolt of 1857 and characterized that policy as 'subordinate isolation'. British governments, according to Lee-Warner, viewed annexation as 'the only solution for aggravated misrule'.<sup>30</sup> Dalhousie's annexations of Satara (1849), Jhansi (1853), Nagpur (1854) and Oudh

(1856) were the 'logical and inevitable outcome' of the principle of non-intervention and revealed 'a general continuity of policy' with that of previous Governors-General.<sup>31</sup>

But the whole question of 'policy' towards the states at any period is open to doubt, as some of the essays that follow suggest. In spite of Lee-Warner's contention, alternatives to annexation were attempted before 1857. Jhansi, for example, was taken under direct British rule in the 1830s and restored to a new ruler in 1842.<sup>32</sup> Dalhousie, moreover, was simply not the insatiable annexationist he has been portrayed.<sup>33</sup> In 1855, with Travancore deep in debt and its English missionaries crying out against oppression, the Court of Directors and the Government of Madras both pressed for a commission of inquiry into the state's affairs and raised the question of annexation. It was Dalhousie who rejected the suggestions as violating the terms of Travancore's treaty.<sup>34</sup> Even Dalhousie, then, did not have an unswerving policy towards the states. Indeed, to lay down an all-India policy proved impossible. The states were too many and too diverse. Many of them, moreover, carried on their relations with provincial governments, not the Government of India, until the 1920s, and provincial governments could be jealous of central direction.<sup>35</sup> They knew their local rulers and conditions far better, they argued, than the Government of India. Some princes agreed. Even Minto's so-called 'non-interference' had its exceptions: the rulers of Nabha (1925) and Indore (1926) were both forced to abdicate for misgovernment.<sup>36</sup>

What is much more apparent than a clear-cut 'policy' towards the states is a system of relationships within states between the ruler, his minister, the British Resident and often the ruler's lineage group or nobility. This is natural. There were resources to be divided and rival principals with differing aims to compete for them. The British Government might have definite 'policies' towards specific states at particular times, and it would be the job of the Resident to see such policy implemented; but rulers, ministers and *jagirdars* also had goals and interests. The adjustment of these rivalries took different forms, depending on the state and the time, but in most states this jockeying for power was a constant feature, as I have suggested elsewhere.<sup>37</sup>

After the revolt of 1857, no state was ever again annexed, though some, like Manipur which rebelled in 1891, were administered directly by British officers for long periods. Such rule in Manipur

lasted until 1907.<sup>38</sup> In the immediate post-revolt period, the princes were seen as potential dangers, 'the natural leaders of the people', traditional rulers who could command a following. As Manipur illustrated in 1891, in remote areas this may have been a true appreciation for many years after. However, by 1909 when Minto made his declaration of 'non-intervention', the princes were seen in a different light. Any likelihood of their being inclined or able to lead rebellions against British rule had long passed. They had been supplanted as a threat by nationalist 'agitators' and terrorists who were seen as subversive of not only British, but princely, rule. In meeting this new challenge, the princes could be useful to the British by keeping the areas they ruled immune from the agitations of British India and providing loyal and urbane figureheads for imperial and world display. Moreover, as Barbara Ramusack shows in this book, British Governments could use princes like Patiala to influence important communities—in Patiala's case, the Sikhs—in British India. The case of the Nawab of Rampur among Muslims in the United Provinces was similar. These considerations became especially important with the outbreak of the First World War and the establishment of the League of Nations. The war and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms produced in 1919 the Chamber of Princes, a body which soon lost most of the major states and wallowed in questions of status when it should have been concerned with survival.<sup>39</sup>

The ambivalence of British policy regarding annexation arose from the fundamental contradiction between the imperial interests of a trading company anxious to expand and rule cheaply and the zeal of the utilitarian reformer who was often entrusted with the task of running the administration. The basic dilemma, moreover, was to plague the British until the end.

James Manor argues in this book that the princes were doomed even before the 1935 Government of India Act opened the way for the transfer of major powers to democratically elected politicians in British India. By not forcing political reform on the states in the 1920s and 1930s, the Political Department was virtually condemning the princes to extinction on the day when *de facto* paramountcy was transferred to Indian politicians.<sup>40</sup> To be sure, some British officers in the Political Department in the 1930s perceived that if the princes were to survive, they must change their administrations to allow greater participation to their subjects and more equitable,



efficient government. In short, they must cultivate some measure of popular support. But most princes resisted any diminution of their powers, while on the British side, diehard imperialists were looking for ways to remain indefinitely in India. For them, the princes might be effete allies, but they were better than no allies at all. It was too late to risk losing their co-operation by attempting to force distasteful reforms upon them. After the Haripura session of the Congress resolved in 1938 to allow individual Congressmen to take part in agitations in the states, the Political Department made efforts to push reforms, particularly in the smaller states. As Manor shows, these attempts had little force behind them and came to virtually nothing. The imperial system, inflexible and inherently conservative, was always likely to frustrate the humanitarian or pragmatic policies of a few officials in a single department.

Yet, on the evidence of the 1950s, one may ponder the alternative: if some of the larger states had established constitutional monarchies based on responsible government in the 1930s, would their politicians have been so eager in 1947-8 to enter the Indian Union? Certainly in the 1950s, by which time the states were irrevocably absorbed into the Union, some state politicians were having misgivings. State revenues went to the central government, and central government officers moved into the states. Would not a state politician with real power have been better off under his prince?<sup>41</sup> In the middle of the twentieth century, there may have been little hope for the princes anyway, but the great gap between administrative and political modernization in the states made their demise inevitable.

### III

The states provide an interesting arena for examining some of our ideas based on British Indian experience. Why, one may ask, did none of the states develop a vigorous nationalism of its own? Why did people not come to regard themselves as Travancoreans or Mysoreans first, and Indians second? On the face of it, there is no reason why opposition to British rule could not have begun in a few states and been transferred to British India. Indeed, this happened in a very limited way in Baroda, as David Hardiman's chapter shows, and other states—Cochin is a notable example—provided, sometimes knowingly, bases for anti-British activities. Yet there is no question that nationalism spread from British India to the states

and that it was in every case an all-India, not a state, nationalism.

The year 1938 is crucial in this connection. Congress governments were in power in much of British India when the annual Congress session met in the hamlet of Haripura in Bardoli taluk, Gujarat, in February of that year. Previously, Congress had eschewed involvement in agitations within the states and had even—in the case of Nabha in 1923, 1927 and 1928—passed resolutions in support of a deposed ruler. By 1938, however, elite politicians in a number of states were keen to follow the path of acquaintances and friends in British India who were enjoying power as ministers and MLAs under a system of responsible government. At the same time, as John Wood argues in this book, factions within the Indian National Congress were involved in increasingly bitter rivalry and began to see the states as a potential source of sympathetic delegates who could help to provide the numbers to control the All-India Congress Committee. The Haripura Resolution, as finally passed, was a compromise that committed Congress to no more than 'moral support and sympathy' to movements for responsible government within the states. It prohibited such movements from being undertaken in the name of Congress, though individual Congressmen might take part as a matter of conscience.

The resolution, however, gave more than enough encouragement to would-be nationalists in the states. Agitations for responsible government erupted in most princely areas: Mysore, Hyderabad, Travancore, Baroda, Kathiawar, the Orissan states, Mewar, Jaipur. Congress, however, was as good as its word: though moral support and sympathy were forthcoming, there was little more. Congress governments in the provinces of British India tended to look on the agitations as a troublesome complication. In every case, the movements were suppressed or defused without princes' surrendering any significant measure of power.<sup>42</sup>

With the exception of Travancore, all these manifestations were town-based, and revealed the intimate connection between nationalism and western-style education and attitudes.<sup>43</sup> The answer to the question of why there were no strong princely-state 'nationalisms' appears to lie here. Nationalism, as it developed in British India, was initially manifested among the service castes who were the first to receive western education, to compete with the British for the jobs such education trained them to seek, and to feel the snubs of racism. But the opposition thus generated could not

alone be a serious challenge to British rule. The cities, and their occupants, remained under control in both 1857 and 1942. It was only when Gandhi gave the Congress firm roots in the countryside, and when western-style education had allowed prosperous folk in the country to place one leg in the towns (through sons and brothers educated in town schools and employed in town professions) that the threat to British rule became imminent.

The philosophy of nationalism as it developed in the Congress, even the Gandhian Congress, was 'modernizing': in its broadest sense, it stressed the rights of individual men and the need for both political and social changes. In the majority of the states, education had not permeated as it had in British India, and educated men lived overwhelmingly in the towns where they could be easily watched and controlled. The 'straddling' of the town-country divide had scarcely begun. In states, like Travancore, Baroda and Mysore, where education had flowed into the countryside, it had brought with it concepts of modernity that made princely rule seem anachronistic. The British, after all, had seen to it that there would be few Peter the Greats among Indian princes; the leader-modernizer prince was discouraged. Newly educated men, therefore, had been nurtured in doctrines that made it difficult to accept princely rule, especially when there were more potent appeals, to which they could readily respond, being purveyed by Gandhi, Nehru and their followers in British India. Once education had lifted a man's horizons beyond his village, it was not possible to make them stop at the boundaries of a state created by a treaty in the eighteenth century. In most states, the agitations of 1938 were confined to the towns where, as John Wood shows for Rajkot, they could be bought off or crushed, even if they enjoyed the patronage of Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. In Baroda, where they threatened to spread to the rural areas, they were bought off with a Rs 20 lakh reduction in the land revenue demand.<sup>44</sup> In Mysore, the urban elite leadership was won over by the government with promises of talks on constitutional reform. In Travancore, the movement, though it burned hotly through September and October 1938 in both town and countryside, was fiercely repressed; the old elite leadership welcomed pardons and release from long jail terms.<sup>45</sup> In Hyderabad, the support for the satyagraha of the State Congress, a mofussil-based and increasingly Hindu organization, came from the outlying urban centres and from volunteers from outside the state.

Hyderabad's bid for independence in 1947–8 failed because what Hyderabadi nationalism there was, was confined to a small old elite in Hyderabad city. The countryside, especially Telengana, no longer saw any relevance in the princely regime.<sup>46</sup> The Travancore attempt at independence in 1947 was the product of princely illusion and commanded no support except that which could be coerced.<sup>47</sup> The states, then, indicate the importance of education, communications and accompanying ideas of modernity for nationalism in India. To literate citizens of the states, aware of a wider world, their rulers were clearly dependents of the British. If one's destiny in many spheres lay outside the states, then it should be bound up with that of Indians, like Gandhi and Nehru, not British viceroys. The processes which brought ideas of nationalism made the princes seem anachronistic.

There are other fairly common notions about the states which the chapters in this volume test. One is that all changes in British India were dependent on British innovations, that Indian social movements were responses to British ideas and that political developments stemmed from the creation by the British of new political institutions—in short, that without British rule, there would have been no change at all, that Indian society was intrinsically stable. Rajat Ray's chapter in this book, however, argues provocatively that the nature of rural society in Mewar made conflict and change likely, even though British influence was minimal and the conflict was cast in different terms from that of British India. In Travancore, though western-style education is crucial to any explanation of the state's vigorous politics, there is little indication that men were responding to institutional innovation. Rather, the state's peculiar social structure, coupled with widespread education and the growth of a cash economy, generated caste associations which lobbied for social recognition that only the princely government could bestow.

The supposed efficacy of British ideas and influence within the states has assigned to the Indian Political Service a status it did not deserve. 'The officers of this service,' runs a popular misconception, 'were chosen . . . as though for membership of some exclusive club by a mysterious system of grading which took into account their breeding, charisma, coolness under stress and proficiency in sport as well as scholarship and administrative ability. Needless to say, they were also the highest-paid officials in India.'<sup>48</sup> Ian Copland's chapter in this book shows that this simply was not so. The IPS was



chronically short of able officers; its pay scales were low; its men were often a poor match for the rulers and ministers of the states. The blind conservatism of the Political Service in the 1930s did the princes a disservice, for it gave them little encouragement to make changes in their governments which might have given them a better chance of survival. An example of that conservatism is worth recording. Early in 1938, the Agent for the Madras States warned the Dewan of Travancore that attempts were being made in India to start a Left Book Club like the one in England run by 'the publisher and British Communist sympathizer Mr Victor Gollancz.' The Agent darkly cautioned that 'any such developments are thus of considerable potential danger'.<sup>49</sup> Nor is the picture—so fondly and patronizingly nurtured in the memoirs of retired officials—of the prevaricating, unctuous ruler and the upright, honest Resident necessarily correct. The remarkable Maharaja Rama Varma of Cochin (1852–1933) was 'amazed' to catch his Resident in a 'deliberate lie', and thereafter often based his decisions on the assumption that Residents sent false reports which suited them to their superiors in Madras.<sup>50</sup>

Some princes were able and progressive. Rama Varma of Cochin, (ruled 1895–1914) was finally driven to abdicate when British Governments would not approve his schemes for land and legislative reforms.<sup>51</sup> Rama Varma should have been, for British officials, a model prince. He drove on a vigorous programme of reform, demanded the best-educated men from British service as Dewans, shot birds, played badminton and pingpong, learned to ride a bicycle in his forties, yet handed down conservative rulings in social questions.<sup>52</sup> He was, however, too active a prince; his administration stood to make the government of British India seem pedestrian and less than brilliant. Rama Varma was not alone. Vishakhram Tirunal, who ruled Travancore from 1880–5, was a similar educated modernizer, while the Gaikwad of Baroda, as David Hardiman points out in this book, was in his early years a good administrator and keen innovator. Free compulsory education, for example, was first introduced in India in a taluk of Baroda in 1894. In the last analysis, though a prince was a dependent of the British, he had room, within limits, to innovate. If he chose to spend fifteen lakhs of rupees annually on education instead of five lakhs, he could do so. Wavell saw this clearly in 1945:

... a State which sets out to run a good administration has certain initial advantages. ... The Ruler or his Government can be much more dictatorial than a Provincial Government about such matters as town planning .... Such revenue as is collected from railways, income-tax and what would in British India be Central excises, goes straight back into the State treasury. The State can also take part in industry in a way which would be considered most unorthodox in British India. Mysore and Travancore seem to have taken full advantage of their opportunities.<sup>53</sup>

Travancore, Cochin and Baroda became the most literate areas of India chiefly because their princes and ministers chose to spend a larger percentage of the revenue on education than was spent in British India.

Yet why were many princes perfect protagonists for railway-bookstand fiction? The British after all were unceasing in their rhetoric about the need to develop 'character' in young princes and educate them to be good rulers. Schools like Rajkumar College, Rajkot, and Mayo College, Ajmer, were founded for the education of future princes, and 'manly' tutors and companions were sent to mould young princely minds.<sup>54</sup> What went wrong? Rama Varma of Cochin abdicated in frustration. Vishakhram Tirunal died after a reign of only five years. Already he was clashing with British Residents who opined that he and his minister held 'erroneous views with regard to the relation of Travancore to the Paramount Power'.<sup>55</sup> The Gaikwad of Baroda, having disgraced himself in British eyes as a patron of violent nationalists, found his powers curtailed and lost interest in his administration. Edward Haynes' chapter in this volume shows how the raja of Alwar, removed from the 'unwholesome' atmosphere of his state and educated at Mayo College, returned with an ambition to take a constructive part in the administration. But the strictly regulated, wooden bureaucracy of British India, which had been implanted in Alwar during minorities, had no need of a raja; there were not enough garden parties to keep a prince occupied. Influenced by his Mayo College education, the raja set about to 'modernize' the *jagirdars*, the state's landed Rajput aristocracy, with whom his predecessors had been constrained to deal skilfully to survive. But the outcome of the raja's proposed Jagir Council was not the reform of the nobles, with the raja at their head like an Indian Peter the Great, using a progressive nobility to counter-balance the dead weight of the new bureaucracy. Rather, the bureaucracy transformed the Jagir Council into another department of government, effectively beyond the Maharaja's

influence. Haynes concludes that 'the Maharaja of Alwar drifted from a benign to a malevolent despotism'.

The dilemma was almost insoluble. Westernized princes generally had bureaucratized states, and were thus cut off from the local magnates whose co-operation their predecessors had had to ensure. Moreover, for purposes of the unadventurous administration which British Residents characterized as 'sound', a raja was unnecessary. A prince who tried to do too much was a bigger nuisance than one who did nothing at all. The presence of the Resident added to the burdens of rulership. The 'modern' prince had not only to contend with the centrifugal pull of territorial magnates and with an emergent bureaucracy which might contain outsiders and British clients, but with the existence of a rival government on his doorstep, a government moreover to which the state's subjects were encouraged to look for redress of grievances. This, together with the fact that princes were often bound by treaty to rule according to British 'advice', made the post of Resident one of considerable responsibility; yet, as Ian Copland shows, the Residents were generally men of mediocre intellect and conservative instincts. It was not surprising therefore that many princes fell back on palace favourites and parallel administrations which they could control and which could often outflank the official bureaucracy. Much 'misrule' and princely 'excess' were the product of the impossible situation in which a prince was placed. The life of the Political Department's model ruler—progressive, but not too progressive; taking part in the administration, but not too big a part—would have been boring indeed.

#### IV

Until now studies that have attempted to deal with more than one state have concentrated on British policy. Yet policy, as I have already suggested, was never hard-and-fast; moreover, it tells us little about the nature of princely rule and the common problems of the states. Similar problems, however, there were, as the chapters in this book make clear, and it is possible, by comparison and contrast, to discern a number of 'model' situations common to many of the states.

Edward Haynes' paper, with which this book begins, spells out perhaps the most widespread of all processes in the states: the growth of bureaucracies in what were once traditional rulerships.

Once the British had established their dominance of the states in the early nineteenth century, the pressure to bureaucratize at least some areas of princely government grew. There were often, to begin with, subsidies to the British government to be paid, and the old methods of revenue collection lacked the consistency and efficiency that regular payments demanded. No ruler, moreover, would remain dependent on others if he saw a way of concentrating power in himself. Much of the eighteenth-century history of the states was a tale of rulers at various levels seeking to put down overmighty subjects or escape from the bonds of suzerains. To achieve such ends, a ruler needed men paid by, and loyal to, himself. There had, therefore, already been moves towards bureaucracy by some of the successful eighteenth-century princely conquerors.<sup>56</sup> With the coming of British suzerainty, princes who had hitherto been dependent on the armies supplied by their *jagirdars* began to seek ways to reduce their power. Haynes' case of Alwar is highly instructive. With British approval, the Maharaja in the 1830s introduced Muslim administrators from Delhi, and the power of his *jagirdars*, who had traditionally been the supporters and legitimizers of his authority, was thereby reduced. In protest, the *jagirdars* rebelled in 1858 and again in 1870 after the Maharaja had attempted to resume some *jagirs* and use the revenue to pay for his own personal troops. In seeking to reduce the powers of the unpredictable and potentially disorderly *jagirdars*, the rulers had the support of the British, and during periods of minority in the 1870s, British Residents sought to implant a bureaucracy of the British Indian kind firmly in the state and thus further reduce the *jagirdars*. Such attempts to curtail the powers of the landed nobility were also clear in Baroda in the 1870s and 1880s (David Hardiman), in Mewar (Rajat Ray), in Jaipur, in Kolhapur and elsewhere.<sup>57</sup> There could, however, be variations on this new-administrators-versus-old-nobility theme. The Maharaja of Alwar, for example, made a last-ditch attempt to use the *jagirdars* as allies against the new bureaucracy that was undermining what he saw as his role and prerogatives. As Karen Leonard shows for Hyderabad, the Diwan, Salar Jung I, sought to modernize the administration, but as an old Hyderabad noble himself, to keep the imported bureaucrats from political power. Such a stratagem, however, could be only temporarily successful.

Virtually every state at some time underwent this modernizing, bureaucratizing process. Even in Mewar, as Rajat Ray shows, there



were some moves in this direction before the accession in 1884 of that remarkable and long-lived conservative, Maharana Fateh Singh, who refused to have a Dewan or spend money on education. The depth of administrative change depended to some extent on chance: a long minority could allow British officials to push it on; the longevity of an honest, orthodox prince like Fateh Singh could stop it dead. Such longevity, however, was rare. Moreover, the English education of princes, which was encouraged from the 1860s, conditioned them to accept and desire 'modern' changes. In Travancore, for example, princes were educated in English from the 1820s, and the two men who ruled between 1860 and 1885 were enthusiastic modernizers in all matters except religion.<sup>58</sup> In Cochin, the first English-educated Maharaja, the admirable Rama Varma who abdicated in 1914, did not come to the gaddi until 1895, and it was only then that Cochin, though a neighbouring state of Travancore and sharing the same British Resident, carried out a number of administrative changes which Travancore had effected twenty years before. In Baroda, Sir T. Madhava Rao, the man who had been Dewan of Travancore from 1857-72, pushed through the administrative revolution in the 1870s and early 1880s during a period of minority. The succeeding Gaikwad, Sayajirao, the first ruler of Baroda to be educated in English, was a confirmed modernizer and innovator; the process of administrative change went forward. In Rajkot, the process was driven on by a similar sort of ruler, Thakur Sahib Lakhajiraj, from 1890-1930, as John Wood shows.

These administrative changes made the states more intelligible to, and more easily supervised by, the British. Moreover, where there were strong, potentially disruptive nobilities, administrative change worked to limit their power, an end which seemed desirable both to most rulers and to British governments. The states were thus pulled slowly, state by state, into the overarching imperial system of administration. Indeed, on the basis of the chapters in this volume, it is clear that many states were not especially 'backward' administratively. Travancore and Cochin by the 1930s probably had a higher ratio of government servants to population than British India. Mysore was highly bureaucratized. Hyderabad was not nearly so 'backward' as it has often been supposed, and even little Rajkot had a long-established administration on British lines. It is not surprising, therefore, that the states were integrated so smoothly with the Indian Union in the years after 1947. Adminis-

tratively, most of the major states already had functioning bureaucracies and were part of the imperial system. To insert an officer of the Government of India into a high post in a state bureaucracy after 1947 was not difficult, and the state administration could then be generally relied upon to carry out the Government of India's plans.

In British India, the Company's bureaucracy had grown up at much the same time and by much the same rules in all areas. Certainly, it was functioning throughout India by the time of the Revolt of 1857. In the states, however, administrative change did not begin until about this time and then took place piecemeal, the established British Indian system being used as the model. Indians born and trained in British India usually brought the new methods and skills to the states and moved into some of the best posts. But change in British India was not confined to the administration. Indeed, once the so-called steel frame of British Indian bureaucracy was in place, certain limited political powers began to be devolved on Indians. From the 1860s, various provisions for local government were introduced, and in 1882 Ripon's Local Self-Government Act established the elective principle. In 1892 the provincial councils were enlarged, and again, provision was made in some cases for elections.<sup>59</sup> The Morley-Minto (1909) and Montagu-Chelmsford (1919) reforms further widened the scope for ambitious, educated men in British India to enjoy office and power.

In this area, the states differed strikingly. Mysore, to be sure, had an annual representative assembly from 1881, and Travancore, an all-official legislative council from 1887 and a Mysore-style assembly from 1904. Baroda had a legislative council from 1907. These bodies were largely talking-shops, composed of trusted officials or designed to flatter the dignities of newly educated men. A former British Resident remarked wryly of the new Travancore assembly in 1904: 'It will do no harm until it begins to think it must be doing something on its own account, and then it will be told that it mustn't.'<sup>60</sup> Yet, as James Manor has pointed out elsewhere,<sup>61</sup> aspirations once awakened were difficult to lull, even in a princely state. One newly educated Travancorean foreshadowed this in 1888 after the founding of the legislative council:

The Council, in itself, is powerless to do any good to the country . . . Yet, like the Magna Carta, the Legislative Council bids fair to be a blessing . . . ; and though not in the 'living present', at least in the near future, it will

develop in power and strength and be able to secure immunities and privileges not looked for at the present moment by the Travancore subjects.<sup>62</sup>

As the elective principle and notions of popular government gained acceptance in British India, they began to be taken as concomitants of modernity by the educated citizens of the states. But in not a single state by the 1930s had there been transfers of powers comparable to those in British India. We thus see in many states what Karen Leonard refers to as 'the increasingly different rates of administrative and political modernization', and the impossibility of isolating administrative change from political and social movements.

The new bureaucracies were where power increasingly lay in many states. But these bureaucracies were very often staffed in the beginning with men from British India. The local nobility, dominant peasants, and mercantile classes did not at this stage have the necessary skills. But if part of the 'modernization' programme included—as was often the case—encouragement of western-style education, some members of these classes were soon in a position to seek the new posts. The outsiders in control naturally aimed to secure their own and their children's futures, and did their best to parry the attempts of locally educated men to enter the administration.<sup>63</sup> Karen Leonard's chapter on the growth of the Mulki-non-Mulki question in Hyderabad documents this process and shows how the non-Mulki officials, once in political as well as administrative control, were able to alter the rules to suit themselves. The Hyderabad case is perhaps the best example, because the legacy remains in the form of the recent Telengana agitation; but Hyderabad was by no means the only case. In similar circumstances, the cry 'Travancore for the Travancoreans' went up in the 1880s and 1890s, 'Mysore for the Mysoreans' at the turn of the century, and 'Kolhapur for the Non-Brahmins' in the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>64</sup> Of the important, developed states only Baroda appears to have avoided this type of conflict. There, as Hardiman shows, the dominant peasant caste, the Patidars, took to the new schools from the late 1870s, and with the Gaikwad's encouragement, moved smoothly into the administration. By 1890 a Patidar had become Dewan, and the alliance between the ruling house and the rich peasantry was firmly established. When fierce nationalist agitation threatened in 1938, Patidar influence in—and

on—the bureaucracy helped to engineer large remissions of land revenue. There were no further agitations in Baroda.

The nature of political activity within a state often depended on a ruler's caste, religion or religious position. In Travancore, for example, as my chapter in this book tries to show, the Maharaja was acknowledged as the arbiter of Hindu orthodoxy. From the turn of the century, politics increasingly revolved around the efforts of the growing middle class among low-caste men to have the ruler abolish the disabilities—at the apex, the prohibition against entering temples—that society and government enforced against them. In Travancore, it was seen as potentially within the ruler's power to legitimize the enhanced status of the low castes. In the course of campaigns to persuade the ruler to exercise that power, thousands of low-caste men were introduced to new and radical political ideas.

Some rulers, moreover, came from tiny minority castes. As ideas of democracy spread and caste and community became useful political rallying cries, such a ruler's claim to authority declined, for not only was he an autocrat, but an autocrat lacking ties with the dominant social groups in his state. On the other hand, the majority of the rulers of the Punjab states were Sikhs, as were a powerful minority of their subjects. Barbara Ramusack shows how Sikh princes, notably Patiala and Nabha, sought to present themselves as leaders of the Sikh community both within and without their states. Their rivalry was intense, for acknowledgement as leader of the community brought not only personal satisfaction, but increased respect from the British and influence among potentially anti-government movements within the state. By maintaining their positions as Sikh leaders, Maharajas of Patiala avoided serious agitations against their rule and secured favoured treatment from Congress governments after independence. Similarly, one probable reason that Baroda and Kolhapur avoided nationalist movements in the 1940s was that their princes were themselves non-Brahmins and had long ago aligned themselves with the dominant non-Brahmin peasant groups in their states. In contrast, in Mysore, Travancore and Hyderabad where the struggles were bitter, the rulers came from tiny minority groups. In Hyderabad, the Nizam was a Muslim ruling a state that was eighty-five per cent Hindu. In such a situation, it was not surprising that the ruler felt the pull of Muslim communal politics in the 1930s and 1940s as an apparent antidote to the threat of democratic—and therefore ultimately,



Hindu—control. In Travancore the Maharaja claimed to act as the earthly trustee of a Hindu deity; the state controlled hundreds of temples. But the population was twenty-five per cent Christian and close to forty-five per cent low-caste Hindu. The rulers, traditionally Brahmin-dominated, came increasingly to be portrayed as favouring caste-Hindus. In fact by the 1930s the evidence suggests that the powers behind the simple young Maharaja were seeking to stem Christian conversion and economic power by consolidating all castes into a united Hindu community. 'Communal' politics in Travancore became among the bitterest in India. A variation of the theme occurred in the Balasore states of Orissa, where Rajput rulers of a few states, sought as of old to put themselves at the head of their large tribal populations and use them to ward off town-dominated, Hindu (but non-Rajput) Congress movements.<sup>65</sup>

None of these attempts was successful. The anachronism of autocratic rulers was too great to appeal to the educated and the Congress-oriented. The Nizam of Hyderabad appallingly miscalculated the political arithmetic—and geography—of his state. In the Balasore states, where the rulers may have commanded support of the majority of their subjects, this was no substitute for the support, which local 'nationalist' movements could command, of the over-arching Indian National Congress, the *de facto* successor to paramouncy. John Wood argues in this book that nationalist movements in the princely states were circumscribed by the needs of nationalist politics in British India. In his study of the Rajkot satyagraha of 1938–9, he shows how the movement, though feeding on galling local grievances, was orchestrated from British India to meet the political needs within the Indian National Congress of Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. When their leadership and approval was withdrawn, the movement collapsed. As Robert Stern contends in the last chapter of this book, the sanctioned use—and Congress held the 'rights'—of national symbols and rhetoric had become a substantive resource for politicians in the princely states by the 1930s. The closer Congress came to power, the more potent that resource became. James Manor carries this contention to its logical conclusion when he argues that once it became clear about 1935 that Congress would participate in responsible ministries in the provinces, the princes were doomed; even had the princes entered federation, Congress ministries could have engineered their downfall before long. The agitations of 1938–9 could have been repeated and intensified.

Yet 'doomed' is perhaps too strong a word. To be sure, the princes lost their kingdoms, but they were handsomely compensated with privy purses and other privileges. Indeed, the generosity of the settlements made by Vallabhbhai Patel, V.P. Menon and the States Ministry recalls that which John Malcolm made with the Peshwa in 1818. The reasons too were similar: the quicker the settlement, the less the prospect of complications. One paramount power was succeeding another, as the East India Company had succeeded the Mughals and Marathas; the possibility of anarchy was always present.

In the period from 1947 to 1971, many of the princes retained some measure of political power. As William Richter shows in this book, some princes were successful electoral politicians and obviously still retained—especially in the first two general elections of 1952 and 1957—a considerable hold on the affections of their former subjects. Generally, that hold was strongest where bureaucratizing had gone least far. In Orissa and neighbouring Chhattisgarh, Richter tells us, more than half the princely families have had representatives contest elections since 1947. It would seem that in the wilder, remoter, less bureaucratized states—and none were wilder and remoter than the Chhattisgarh and Orissa states—vestiges of the 'little kingdom' remained, and the ruler was closer to his subjects, who still held him in some awe. Before independence, the centralized, bureaucratic state was best able to carry out the orders of its rulers; but after integration it was in such states—Trayancore, Mysore and Cochin are examples—that the ruling family was most easily displaced. Richter's findings are that medium-sized states have produced the most princely politicians; such families, he argues, had the necessary resources to participate in electoral politics and, being known over a fairly wide area, were an asset to the party—usually Congress—that recruited them. The big states have produced relatively few princely politicians, partly perhaps because the great wealth of their rulers has made participation in electoral politics seem unnecessary.<sup>66</sup>

Throughout this discussion, one is continually impressed with the importance of political and administrative boundaries. Traditionally, the boundaries of the 'little kingdoms' though geographically defined in a rough sort of way were subject to constant shifts and the 'little kingdoms', to intermittent changes of ruler. The boundaries in many cases were frozen as the British found them at the beginning

of the nineteenth century. The years that followed were to produce different developments in, for example, Baroda than in British Gujarat. Levels of education and taxation differed; so too did men's political preoccupations, which were largely determined by the manner in which the resources of a polity were distributed. The Maharaja of Travancore could grant temple-entry; no British Government could. But borders cut arbitrarily across cultural, linguistic and social regions; borders, moreover, were permeable. Men travelled, married and traded across them; railways and newspapers passed over them. At another level, the paramount power inexorably pressed bureaucratic techniques on the governments of princely states. Both socially and administratively, boundaries were being breached even as they were being preserved. The logical outcome was the integration of the princely states with the all-encompassing Government of India, and the ultimate creation of new states based on linguistic and cultural boundaries.<sup>67</sup>

The chapters in this volume cover a wide range of periods, states and themes. At this stage of our knowledge of the states, diversity is, I think, a virtue. But there are important omissions: nothing specifically on Gwalior or Kashmir, both 21-gun states, ranking fourth and fifth among the states in population. What were the social alliances that supported their rulers? To what extent, and with what effect, was bureaucracy imposed on their administrations? What happened to the local nobility and how did 'national' consciousness arrive? These seem to me some of the important questions to ask about any state.

This volume also lacks any specific study of economic development and capitalism within a state. Hyderabad, for example, embarked on what seems a fascinating programme of state capitalism in the 1920s; one outcome was the famed Charminar cigarette company. But as yet we have little detail about these enterprises. It has been argued elsewhere that the states lagged far behind British India in economic development because the nature of indirect rule discouraged capital from entering the states.<sup>68</sup> This argument, however, ignores the fact that generally the states owed their survival to their location in the least favoured areas of the subcontinent. It should not be surprising therefore that British India had initial advantages. Some states, however—Mysore, Travancore, Baroda and even Rajkot—embarked on a number of ambitious government-aided schemes, but about these we know

little. What was the intention of governments? From where did the capital come? What was the effect on local society and local commerce?

One would also like to know more about the 'backward' states of Central India and Orissa. Rajat Ray argues in this book that in 'backward' Mewar, tensions in rural society held the seeds of unrest and change, even without injections of new resources from British India. Do Central Indian or Orissan states confirm this contention? How vital for the direction of 'modernization' was the structure of local society? What is the effect on men's political behaviour of living in a relatively unified cultural and social area that is crosscut by political boundaries? One would like to see; for example, a detailed study of a British Indian district and a contiguous princely state.

These are all areas, I think, in which examination of the states may be helpful in enhancing our knowledge of the effects of British rule, the processes of 'modernization' and the nature — stable or otherwise—of Indian society. We hope this volume makes some suggestive first steps.

## NOTES

1. The major work on the princes since independence has been concerned with their downfall: V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, Bombay, 1956. For early scholarly studies of specific states, see S.H. Rudolph, 'The Princely States of Rajputana: Ethic, Authority and Structure', *Indian Journal of Political Science*, No. 24, January 1963, pp. 14–32; L.I. and S.H. Rudolph, 'Rajputana under British Paramountcy: The Failure of Indirect Rule', *Journal of Modern History*, XXXVIII, June 1966, pp. 138–60; L.I. and S.H. Rudolph, 'The Political Modernization of an Indian Feudal Order: An Analysis of Rajput Adaptation in Rajasthan', *Journal of Social Issues*, XXIV, October 1968, pp. 93–128. F.G. Bailey, *Politics and Social Change, Orissa in 1959*, London, 1963, also gave indications of the important differences between the former princely and British-ruled areas of Orissa.
2. Quoted in Edward Thompson, *The Making of the Indian Princes*, Oxford, 1944, p. 271.
3. Lytton to Disraeli, 30 April 1876, Lytton Papers, p. 124. I am grateful to Edward Haynes for this reference.
4. Mary, Countess of Minto, *India, Minto and Morley*, London, 1934, p. 343.
5. Quoted in Fitzee to Glancy, 16 August 1938, IOL, Crown Representative Records [hereafter CRR], R/1/29/1934.
6. John Glendevon, *The Viceroy at Bay*, London, 1971, p. 43.
7. H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, London, 1970, p. 359. A. C. Lothian, 'The



- Last Phase of the Indian States', *Quarterly Review*, CLXL, April 1952, p. 171.  
 Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, Berkeley, 1960, p. 247.
8. Bernard S. Cohn, 'Political Systems in Eighteenth Century India: The Banaras Region', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXXII, 3, 1962, pp. 312-20. Eric J. Miller, 'Caste and Territory in Malabar', *American Anthropologist*, XVI, 1954, pp. 410-20. Burton Stein, 'Integration of the Agrarian System of South India', in R. E. Frykenberg, ed., *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, Madison, 1969, pp. 175-216, especially p. 190. See also J. C. Heesterman, 'India and the Inner Conflict of Tradition', *Daedalus*, Winter 1973, pp. 97-113, and Richard G. Fox, *Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule*, Berkeley, 1971, especially pp. 14-157.
  9. The Marathi-speaking rajas of Tanjore, implanted by Sivaji in the 1670s, are good examples. K. Rajayyan, *A History of British Diplomacy in Tanjore*, Mysore, 1969, pp. 9-13. See also J. F. Richards, 'The Imperial Crisis in the Deccan', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXV, 2, February 1976, p. 256.
  10. Maharaja Martanda Varma created the state of Travancore in this way between 1729 and 1758. A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1970, pp. 273-86.
  11. Cohn, 'Political Systems', pp. 313-14.
  12. A. B. Keith, *A Constitutional History of India*, Allahabad, 1961, pp. 23-4.
  13. H. H. Dodwell, ed., *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, Delhi, 1969, p. 519. For a typology of the impingement of British rule elsewhere, see D. A. Low, *Lion Rampant*, London, 1973, pp. 31-3.
  14. Dodwell, ed., *History of India*, p. 522-3.
  15. The Mughals, to be sure, had a sophisticated administration, but it does not appear to me to have been bureaucratic in the Weberian sense. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, New York, 1964, pp. 333-4.
  16. William Lee-Warner, *The Protected Princes of India*, London, 1894, pp. 51-3.
  17. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
  18. C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, Calcutta, 5th revised edn, 1931, II, pp. 105-6, 308; X, pp. 43-51.
  19. Quoted in Thompson, *Making of Princes*, p. 97.
  20. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
  21. Aitchison, *passim*.
  22. Thompson, *Making of Princes*, p. 245.
  23. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
  24. Ian Copland drew my attention to this, and to Stewart N. Gordon, 'Sarf and Sword: Thugs, Marauders and State Formation in Malwa', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, VI, 1969, pp. 418-21 and 423.
  25. Thompson, *Making of Princes*, pp. 202-4, Manohar Malgonkar, *Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur*, Bombay, 1971, pp. 362-5, 418.
  26. Note, for example, John Malcolm's generous settlement of a pension of Rs 8 lakhs a year on the Peshwa in 1818.
  27. Tellicherry Factory Records. *Letters to Tellicherry*, I, p. 25, quoted in A. P. Ibrahim Kunju, 'Marthanda Varma and His Times', Ph.D. thesis, University of Kerala, 1971, p. 106.

28. Quoted in Thompson, *Making of Princes*, pp. 22–3.
29. Lee-Warner, *Protected Princes*, p. 145. Mandvi (in Kathiawar), Kolaba (south of Bombay), Jaloun (central India) and Surat had all lapsed. A raja of Satara had been deposed in 1839 for communicating with the Portuguese in Goa and with the ex-ruler of Nagpur. His brother was installed in his place. Satara lapsed in 1849. Aitchison, *Treaties*, VIII, pp. 361–2.
30. Lee-Warner, *Protected Princes*, p. 144.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 144–5.
32. William Wilson Hunter, *The Marquess of Dalhousie*, Delhi, 1961, p. 95.
33. Low, *Lion Rampant*, p. 52.
34. Chief Secretary [hereafter Ch. Sec.], Madras Government to the Secretary to the Government of India, 6 February 1858, NAI, Foreign Consultations, No. 59, 15 April 1859.
35. The Madras states, for example, carried on relations with the Government of Madras until 1923. See also Ian Copland, 'The Baroda Crisis of 1873–7: A Study in Governmental Rivalry', *Modern Asian Studies*, II, 2, 1968, pp. 97–123.
36. Raja of Sangli, Memorandum, n.d., enclosed with Viceroy to Provincial Governors, 6 October 1938, CRR, R/1/29/1734. Barbara N. Ramusack, 'Incident at Nabha', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVIII, 3, May 1969, pp. 568–9. Ian Copland drew my attention to Indore. Jai Singh of Alwar was also forced to abdicate in 1933.
37. This is dealt with more fully in Robin Jeffrey, 'The Politics of "Indirect Rule": Types of Relationship among Rulers, Ministers and Residents in a "Native State"', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, XIII, 3, November 1975, pp. 261–81.
38. Sanamani Yamben, 'Nupi Lan: Manipur Women's Agitation, 1939', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21 February 1976, pp. 325–31.
39. Urmila Phadnis, *Towards the Integration of the Indian States, 1919–47*, Bombay, 1968, pp. 24–37. William L. Richter and Barbara N. Ramusack, 'The Chamber and the Consultation: Changing Forms of Princely Association in India', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXIV, 3, May 1975, pp. 755–76.
40. 'Paramountcy' as a term has a long and controversial history. See Thompson, *Making of Princes*, pp. 283–7.
41. See, for example, Madras Public Department, 4569/23 December 1949, regarding the integration of erstwhile British Cochin with Travancore-Cochin state; T. K. Koshy, 'Financial and Administrative Relations between Kerala and the Centre, 1947–59', M.Litt. thesis in history, University of Kerala, 1962, pp. 102–3, 137, 167; *Memorandum forwarded to the Finance Commission, Government of India by the Travancore-Cochin Government regarding (i) the state's share of the allocation of income tax; and (ii) grants-in-aid from the centre*, Trivandrum, 1952, pp. 16, 19–21.
42. For Congress resolutions on the states, see AICC Papers, G-35/1938 Part VII, Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi. For the debate on the resolution at Haripura, see the *Hindu*, 19 February 1938, p. 13. Gandhi's views on the states are discussed in Urmila Phadnis, 'Gandhi and the Indian States—a Probe in Strategy', in *Gandhi: Theory and Practice: Social Impact and Contemporary Relevance*, Transactions of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, XI, Simla,

- 1969, pp. 360–74. R. L. Handa, *History of Freedom Struggle in Princely States*, New Delhi, 1968, gives brief accounts of the 1938–9 agitations.
43. James Manor, 'Gandhian Politics and the Challenge to Princely Authority in Mysore, 1936–47', and Robin Jeffrey, 'A Sanctified Label—"Congress" in Travancore Politics, 1938–48', in D. A. Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*, London, 1977, pp. 405–33 and 435–72.
  44. See David Hardiman in this book.
  45. Jeffrey, 'Sanctified Label', pp. 452–6.
  46. See Karen Leonard in this book, and Carolyn M. Elliott, 'Decline of a Patrimonial Regime: The Telengana Rebellion in India, 1946–51', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXIV, 1, November 1974, pp. 27–47.
  47. Jeffrey, 'Sanctified Label', pp. 461–3.
  48. Manohar Malgonkar, 'Princely India', in Frank Moraes and Edward Howe, eds., *India introduced by John Kenneth Galbraith*, New York, 1974, p. 90.
  49. C. P. Skrine to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, 7 January 1938, Kerala Secretariat, Travancore Confidential Section, 1663/1937.
  50. Diary of Maharaja Rama Varma, 30 October 1914, 1 May 1910; I. N. Menon, 'The Rajarshi of Cochin. A Memoir of His Highness Rajah Sir Rama Vurmah, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.', pp. 94 and 101. Kerala State Archives, Ernakulam.
  51. Rama Varma Diary, 23 November 1913.
  52. *Ibid.*, 11 March 1897 and *passim*.
  53. Wavell to Amery, 21 February 1945, in Nicholas Mansergh and Penderel Moon, eds., *The Transfer of Power, 1942–7*, V, London, 1974, p. 591.
  54. Manohar Malgonkar, *The Princes*, Delhi, 1970, pp. 74–9. For a cynical view, see Rudyard Kipling's verse, 'A Legend of the Foreign Office'.
  55. Ch. Sec., Madras Government to Resident, 29 July 1886, National Archives of India, Madras Residency Records [hereafter MRR], Madras Political Proceedings [hereafter MPP], G. O. No. 740, 29 July 1886.
  56. Maharaja Martanda Varma had clearly done this in the course of his establishment of a big Travancore state in the 1729–58 period.
  57. K. L. Kamal and Robert W. Stern, 'Jaipur's Freedom Struggle and the Bourgeois Revolution', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, XI, 3, November 1973, p. 232. Ian Copland, 'The Maharaja of Kolhapur and the Non-Brahmin Movement, 1902–10', *Modern Asian Studies*, VI, 2, 1973, pp. 215–17.
  58. Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847–1908*, London, 1976, pp. 70–103.
  59. S. Gopal, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, 1880–4*, Oxford, 1953, pp. 83–112.
  60. Sir James Thompson to Lord Amthill, 20 October 1904, IOL, Amthill P., E/233/34/2.
  61. James Manor, 'Princely Mysore Before the Storm: The State-level Political System of India's Model State, 1920–36', *Modern Asian Studies*, IX, 1, 1975, pp. 31–58.
  62. *Madras Standard*, 19 September 1888, p. 2.
  63. In Travancore the Maratha Brahmin Administrators who entered the state with British Residents from 1800 kept many of the government accounts in Marathi; a language which Malayalis did not know.
  64. James Manor, *Political Change in an Indian State, Mysore, 1910–55*, Delhi,

1977. Donald B. Rosenthal, 'From Reformist Princes to "Cooperative Kings"', Political Change in Pre-Independence Kolhapur', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 May 1973, p. 905; Jeffrey, *Nayar Dominance*, pp. 157-76.
65. For the Punjab states, see Barbara Ramusack's chapter in this book and Ramesh Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement in East Punjab States*, Patiala, 1972, pp. 162-70. I am grateful to Lesley Joseph for information on the Orissan states. See also Sir Conrad Corfield, *The Princely India I Knew*, Madras, 1975, p. 55.
66. Fatehsinhrao Gaikwad, for example, has been the member of the Lok Sabha from Baroda City since 1957, and Dr Karan Singh of Kashmir was (in early 1977) a member of the Union cabinet.
67. For the legacy of the states in post-independence politics, see John R. Wood, 'The Political Integration of British and Princely Gujarat: The Historical-Political Dimension of Indian State Politics', Ph.D. thesis in political science, Columbia University, 1972; William L. Richter, 'Electoral Patterns in Post-Princely India', in Myron Weiner and John Osgood Field, eds., *Electoral Politics in the Indian States*, Delhi, 1975, pp. 1-77; and Richard Sisson, *The Congress Party in Rajasthan*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1972.
68. John Hurd, 'The Influence of British Policy on Industrial Development in Princely States of India, 1890-1933', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, XII, 4, October-December 1975, pp. 410-24. I am grateful to Barry Pavier, formerly of the University of Sussex, for information about Hyderabad.



# 1

## ALWAR Bureaucracy versus Traditional Rulership: Raja, *Jagirdars* and New Administrators, 1892–1910

EDWARD S. HAYNES

A recurring topic in the study of political institutions is the replacement of traditional elite groups by 'modern' administrators. In India this bureaucratic rationalization was accomplished during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under the aegis of the officials of the British Empire in India. Historians of the Empire have often argued that the earlier political systems were easily and naturally replaced by new institutions and individuals as the patrimonial systems gave way to modern bureaucratic models of administration with which competition was impossible. These historians assume that the superiority of the new institutions was the reason for their quick acceptance. This chapter offers an opposing view, that the earlier patterns of political and administrative behaviour were replaced only because the British officials actively favoured their supplantation by modes which were analogous to their own and, thereby, could more easily be incorporated into the growing system of imperial control. This process also served to displace the customary elite groups of the Indian princely states from their previous political and economic power, destroying their traditional patterns of administrative interaction. The states were, therefore, left without any customary basis for the rationalized bureaucratic institutions and, in many cases, it was this exclusion of

I wish to thank the Shell Companies Foundation, the American Institute of Indian Studies, and Duke University for the financial support for this research. The general topic of *jagirdari* political participation has been discussed in my dissertation, 'Jagirdars and Government: The Political Role of the Kinship Elite in Alwar (Rajputana, India), 1858–1910' (Duke University, 1975).

the raja and the *jagirdars* which led to the misrule which became so common in the twentieth century. This chapter specifically discusses the Rajput state of Alwar, in north-eastern Rajputana (now the Indian state of Rajasthan), located between Jaipur and Delhi.

The Alwar state emerged from Jaipur in the late eighteenth century, when the Naruka cadet lineage of the ruling Jaipur Kachawaha Rajput house established itself in the mountainous north-eastern areas of the state. This newly-independent state was able to maintain its existence through a careful manipulation of its external affairs, balancing Jaipur (weakened by the minority of its ruler), the Mughal court at Delhi (virtually powerless, but valuable as a legitimizing force), the Marathas, and, by 1803, the East India Company. Equally important for the early rulers of Alwar was the use of kinship alliances to create an elite group in the state whose ties to the ruling lineage, whether based on consanguinity or marriage, were reconfirmed by economic power. During the early decades of Alwar's independent existence, a large number of *jagir* estates were awarded to the closest kinsmen of the raja and to other Rajputs who had supported the ruling Naruka lineage in its consolidation of power. These *jagirs* were granted in return for the maintenance of military forces for the durbar (court). Unlike the earlier Mughal equivalent, the Rajput *jagir* was, in effect, a hereditary land holding which could be resumed by the raja only under the most extraordinary circumstances. Perhaps more important than their military role, the Alwar *jagirdars* were the ideological legitimizers of and sharers in the raja's power and authority. As his kinsmen and co-conquerors of the state, the *jagirdars* had a right to participate in affairs of state, a right which became especially important in times of crisis or administrative incapacity, for example during the minority of the raja.

Given the mutually supportive political and economic system in Alwar, it became quite difficult for the raja to assert his independence from the *jagirdars*. While the Alwar *jagirdars* controlled only about one-third of the cultivated area, they held some of the most fertile land in the state. Additionally, the *jagirs* were concentrated in the southern tehsils of Alwar. Since there was no standing army outside the *jagirdari* troops, the raja had little force to counter his kinsmen's growing independence in the state. It was, therefore, necessary for Maharao Raja Banni Singh (ruled 1815–57), the third ruler of Alwar, to seek a class of administrators who would be free

of *jagirdari* influence and responsible only to him for their position, status and tenure, and who would thereby strengthen his power in the state. From about 1842 Banni Singh began to introduce externally-recruited officials into the state from Delhi. This new bureaucratic lineage, the 'Delhi Dewans' had served at the British Residency at Delhi and thus had first-hand experience in British modes of administration. The Dewans were not granted land in Alwar and this, together with their Muslim religion, served to isolate them from the traditional patterns of *jagirdari* political participation and to increase their freedom of action under the patronage of the *raja*. Predictably, they came into conflict with an alliance of powerful *jagirdars*, especially those of the *Bara Kotri* families, the closest relatives of the ruling house, and the other administrative lineages. It was only with the *raja*'s support that they were able to survive the challenges and maintain power.

## I

When Banni Singh died in 1857, his twelve year old son Sheodan Singh acceded to the Alwar gaddi and quickly came under the influence of the Delhi Dewans. While the particulars are unclear, their detractors later claimed that they had persuaded the young ruler of the Mughal Emperor's ultimate victory in the rebellion against the British and encouraged him to adopt the customs and religion of the Delhi court. What is more certain is that Sheodan Singh was increasingly isolated from the *jagirdars* and their role in the state administration, already slight under Banni Singh, virtually disappeared under the young ruler. In the early summer of 1858 an uprising occurred in Alwar city and the Dewans were expelled from the state by an alliance of senior *jagirdars*, non-*jagirdari* Rajputs, and non-Rajput state servants. The discontent felt by the *jagirdars* and state servants over the growing power of the Delhi Dewans was the root of this rebellion. The resentment was first articulated by minor Rajput and non-Rajput officials who had lost their jobs to Muslims brought from Delhi by the Dewans. These newly imported administrators had found themselves unemployed after the British victory over the Mughal Emperor and were given positions in Alwar. This strengthened the power of the Dewans who had been without an advocate since the death of Banni Singh and who found supporters through the introduction into Alwar of a new subordinate administrative cadre loyal to them. The

basis of power in Alwar was military, and therefore most of these appointments were to military positions. Most importantly, the Dewans appointed one of their supporters a *quiladar*, or governor, of the major fort at Rajgarh, in the centre of the largest concentration of Alwar *jagirdars*. The specific control of the army was more difficult, as the bulk of the forces were furnished by the *jagirdars*. Alternative bodies of troops, generally Muslim and therefore outside direct *jagirdari* influence, were recruited to serve as the basis for an independent standing army. Thus, the appeal to the army by the discontented *jagirdars* was simplified by the fact that many Rajput soldiers had been discharged at the conclusion of the recent operations in support of the British and, with some encouragement, these soldiers could seize upon a convenient religious explanation for their sudden unemployment. In other areas of the administration, the Dewans attempted to shut off input other than their own, to the predictable exclusion of the *jagirdars*. This isolation of the ruler from his kinsmen eventually removed them from participation in the formal court ceremonials, which were the symbolic indication of their traditional political interaction with the Maharao Raja. Those who actually lost formal positions in the bureaucracy were Kayasthas and Muslims, as well as Rajputs and small Naruka *jagirdars*, but the leadership of the uprising soon passed to the senior *jagirdars*, who could easily articulate their right to power in the state.

The British quickly intervened in the Alwar dispute in order to prevent the disturbance from spreading into adjacent territories directly under their own administration. Confirming the expulsion of the Muslim Dewans, they created a Council of senior *jagirdars* to manage the state during the ruler's minority. The constraints of Imperial policy after 1858, however, prevented the British Political Agents from assuming a controlling position in the state administration. Instead, they were assigned a role as referees of the Alwar political system and as guarantors of the institutionalized power which the *jagirdars*, viewed as the 'native nobility' of the state, had gained. Accordingly, the Alwar Regency Council was dissolved in 1863 when Sheodan Singh reached his majority and the Political Agency was removed. But the young ruler had been given ruling power without the authority or force to sustain it. With the expulsion of the Delhi Dewans from Alwar, Sheodan Singh was left without supporters and was faced with a body of *jagirdars* who had



held power without reference to their nominal ruler and who now wished to maintain that independence. The ruler attempted to turn to small landholders and to minor administrators in his power struggle with the Alwar *jagirdars*. To strengthen his economic and military position, the raja resumed a number of *jagir* holdings (a very unusual act, but based upon precedents set by British Agents during the minority) and raised new non-Rajput military units with this additional revenue. The Alwar *jagirdars* again rose in rebellion in March 1870 and the British reintervened in an attempt to maintain order.

By the time of their second involvement in Alwar, British prejudices in Indian politics had become evident. The experience of the Mutiny and the convenient designation of Muslims as the villains cannot be overstressed in its emotional impact on the low-level raj officials in the 1870s and 1880s. These prejudices, combined with a romantic attachment to the 'hardy' and 'chivalrous' Rajputs, prejudiced the Agents against the Muslim-leaning Sheodan Singh. While they strove to maintain him as Maharao Raja, there was no attempt to understand or even to consider his position in the power struggle. The servants of the Empire in India could not bring themselves to an act of *lèse-majesté* and depose the Alwar ruler. They saw Sheodan Singh as the sovereign ruler, even when all power in the state was placed in a new council of *jagirdars* in which the raja had a seat but no authority. His removal was urged by officials in India and England, but the political and psychological realities did not permit such a drastic break with tradition. In many ways, the Victorian English acted out their view of monarchy which placed great stress on the irrevocable right of a Prince of the Blood to royal office despite personal failings. Any move to depose Sheodan Singh, whose subjects were perceived as having a corresponding view of kingship and nobility, had to be carefully avoided. The constraints of the British Parliamentary system also influenced this decision, for there were embarrassing precedents of deposed Indian princes having their grievances brought to Westminster for redress.

Thus, British policy in the early 1870s prevented both the blatant assumption of the Alwar administration and the deposition of its ruler. But the British contempt for Sheodan Singh was soon sharpened by his frantic and undiplomatic attempts to regain power, which included an assassination attempt on the Political Agent.

Their confidence in the *jagirdars'* skills as administrators also declined as corruption and lack of western education began to conflict with the British expectations of the government. The Agents began to introduce professional bureaucrats into the Council of Management and, more importantly, into the lower levels of the administration. Soon, ostensibly to improve and rationalize the Alwar government, the British actively began to import administrators who had served in other parts of the raj. Frustrated with their inability to introduce change by working through the customary Rajput state system, the Agents turned to this new group of Indian bureaucrats who could unobtrusively bring about the 'modernization' which they themselves could not accomplish. Even while chiding Sheodan Singh for his past follies in attempting to rule with a class of alien administrators responsible only to himself, the British began to graft an entirely new bureaucratic clique onto the state. The new officials were unresponsive to the pressures of the Alwar political system and, over time, began to absorb much of the traditional authority of the kinship elite.

In 1874, much to the relief of the British officials in Alwar, Maharao Raja Sheodan Singh died. He had no legitimate heir and had indicated no preference for adoption. After several months of factional controversy, the successor was elected by the *Bara Kotri*, the senior Alwar *jagirdars*, and in December 1874 Mungul Singh (only fourteen years old) was formally seated on the Alwar gaddi. It was the custom in Alwar, as in most Rajput states, that upon the succession of a new raja, all the *jagirdars* should present the ruler with a fee, *nuzzerana*, which signified their acceptance of the succession and provided the formal ideological charter of legitimacy for the new regime. Mungul Singh's opponent in the election, Thakur Lukhdhir Singh of Bijwar, and eleven of his supporters refused to present this token of allegiance, thereby openly challenging the validity of the succession. Lukhdhir Singh had been the leader of the 1858 rising against the Delhi Dewans and the most important member of the earlier councils. Neither the British nor the *jagirdars* who had supported Mungul Singh could abide such a challenge and the recalcitrant *thakurs* were forced out of the state and their *jagirs* were resumed and regranted to younger and presumably more pliable heirs. These young *jagirdars* were then sent to the newly-established Mayo College at Ajmer to join Mungul Singh who had entered this school for Rajput nobles in 1875 as the first student.

With these young impediments to administration out of the way, the Political Agents in Alwar were again faced with the necessity of directing a minority rule in a Rajput state. The assumptions which governed British relations with the Indian princes in the late 1870s held that intimate British involvement in a state's affairs would not be allowed to continue beyond the ruler's majority, when the established patterns of administration would continue under the supervision of the adult raja. During minorities the Political Agents were not only the Agents of the Governor-General but were also the overseers of the state during the raja's youthful incapacity. If changes were to be made in the administrative basis of a state under minority rule, they could not simply be introduced by the authority of the Agent but would have to be deeply ingrained in the bureaucracy. Otherwise, any 'advances' in the administration could only be artificial and would be liable to supplantation or distortion when British participation was reduced. A policy was initiated in Alwar of transforming the state bureaucracy into a body which was receptive to administrative innovation and was 'competent' in British terms. Transfers of administrators into Alwar increased and the government began to shift outside the traditional patterns of interaction as responsibility for routine matters passed from the *jagirdars* in the Council to the new classes of imported Indian bureaucrats.

During the minority of Mungul Singh, the Council made many modifications in Alwar, especially in judicial and fiscal institutions, that brought the government into line with those areas of India directly under British rule. Even after the ruler's return to Alwar and his investment with ruling power in 1877, the incorporation of the state into the overarching Imperial System continued.

Although he took little active role in the administration of his state, Maharaja Mungul Singh's power was more secure than that of any of his predecessors on the Alwar gaddi. Through a combination of British paramountcy and a careful isolation of possibly dissenting Rajput lineages (in Mayo College) after 1875, the Alwar ruler had achieved a position that a British officer described as 'something more than *primus inter pares*, as there are no very great nobles whose power might, if combined, overshadow the throne, as is so often the case in the Rajput States'.<sup>1</sup> From the point of view of the British, this was certainly true, for the Alwar *jagirdars* had been displaced from their political and administrative functions by the

new bureaucracy. The major *jagirdars*, while still retaining some local power, had become merely a class to be left undisturbed, whose feelings should be only marginally considered in the formation of state policy. Like the Maharaja, they exercised a declining role in the actual management of the state.

## II

In May 1892, Maharaja Mungul Singh of Alwar died and was succeeded by his son Jai Singh, a minor. As had become the custom, the ten year old ruler was sent to Mayo College while the administration of his state remained in the hands of the Council, which now enjoyed increased power in the state bureaucracy.

Indications of friction between the *jagirdars* and the imported administrators began to appear after Jai Singh's accession. A complicated scandal came to light in 1892 which involved the murder of Munshi Kunj Behari Lal, a member of the Alwar State Council. Apparently, the late Maharaja had suggested the act, if it had not actually been carried out at his behest.<sup>2</sup> Lal had served the Political Agents in an additional role as reformer of the Maharaja's habits, but hostility toward the Councillor had come from institutional as well as from personal conflicts. The Munshi was a representative of the British and of the new administrative cadre which they had introduced into Alwar and which had displaced the traditional governing classes. His growing influence seems to have produced rivalry and discontent among the *jagirdars* and the older state officials on the Council. It was clear that the co-operation between these two factions had increased after the deaths of Mungul Singh and Kunj Behari Lal, and there was evidence that this bureaucratic alliance had attempted to hamper the investigation of the murder.<sup>3</sup> The British officials were reluctant, however, to press the potentially explosive investigation against the other Councillors.

In the matter of Kunj Behari Lal's replacement on the Council, the British were convinced that 'there is no native in Ulwar at present qualified to be admitted to the Council' and appointed Munshi Balmokand Das, then serving the British in Ajmer.<sup>4</sup> Soon after Das's arrival in Alwar the Council was reorganized and its authority further disseminated. It was decided 'to divide the work amongst the Members of Council, only such reports or cases as were of importance or presented special difficulties being disposed of at general meetings of the whole Council'. This formal division of



authority in Alwar was instituted in July 1894 and the influence of the Alwar *jagirdars* was thereby further reduced, with increased power passing to the state bureaucracy. While three of the four members of the Council were *thakurs*, the only important portfolios were held by Balmokand Das and Durjan Singh. Of course, Das had come to the state under British auspices and represented their interests and expectations. Thakur Durjan Singh of Jaoli was a Naruka Rajput, but of a subordinate lineage and his status as a *jagirdar* was not uniformly accepted by the senior *jagirdars*. Therefore, he was outside the traditional range of the Alwar political system. Moreover, his six years of education at Mayo College had given him the training and socialization necessary for important administrative duties under British supervision.<sup>5</sup>

The earlier process of administrative, judicial, and fiscal reform in Alwar was continued by the Council and the state administration was progressively synchronized with the Imperial System of the remainder of the subcontinent. Without exception, this implied the introduction of new bureaucrats into Alwar. But it was not until 1892 that the government attempted any regulation of the *jagirdari* system. In that year a separate Council branch, *Bukshi Jagir*, was created to oversee *jagir* successions and disputes and to act as a court of wards for underage *jagirdars*.<sup>6</sup> By 1896 economic pressures induced by inadequate rainfall had forced the return of most *jagirdari* horse to their villages because sufficient grass was not available to feed the animals; the horsemen were then expected to render service to the durbar as foot soldiers.<sup>7</sup> It was in this same year that the old commander of the Irregular Forces died and was replaced by a *jagirdar* relatively inexperienced with the ways of bureaucracies. The Alwar Council was able to take advantage of these coincidences to begin the reorganization of the *jagirdari* troops, which had first been suggested by the British in 1889. The plan was to reduce the number of men under arms, but it had to be carefully pursued as many delicate questions of hereditary privilege were involved. In the end only about five hundred soldiers were discharged, none from the major *jagirdari* units. Most reductions were made in local troops and fort guards whose maintenance, the Council reasoned, involved state expense and therefore they could more easily and economically be disbanded than could the mass of *jagirdari* troops.<sup>8</sup> While there was a

desire to reduce the privileges of the Alwar *jagirdars*, the bureaucracy was reluctant to attack directly the military basis of their authority. Not until the new administrators felt secure in their power could they undertake sweeping incursions into the local power base of the kinship elite.

At the same time, the agricultural aspects of *jagirdari* status were also being challenged as a result of a new settlement of Alwar's land revenue assessment. By 1896, the work was well under way on the new settlement and problems emerged when it was discovered that there were few reliable land records in the state. The British official in charge of the operations instituted a programme for the training of village *patwaris*, or record keepers, but did not consider the extension of the instruction into the *jagir* villages. There was some question whether these would be excluded from the settlement as had been done in the previous assessment.<sup>9</sup> In 1897 a new Settlement Officer was appointed for Alwar when Michael O'Dwyer was transferred from the Punjab.<sup>10</sup> He made the final decision not to include the *jagir* estates in the new settlement, for 'during the minority of the Maharaja, to have adopted another course would have been bad policy and inexpedient, while it would have created friction and indirectly interfered prejudicially with settlement operations in khalsa [revenue] villages'.<sup>11</sup> Considerations of Political expediency determined this action, although it was admitted that these *jagir* villages were badly in need of a regularized settlement of rights and rents.

The position of the tenants in these villages is unsatisfactory and disputes between them and the holders of estates are constantly engaging the attention of the administration. It was therefore desirable on several grounds to take up the question and define the position of the parties. The feelings of the Jagirdars were however . . . so strongly opposed to the extension of the settlement to their villages that it was thought advisable to leave the matter alone.<sup>12</sup>

The earlier reluctance to interfere in the traditional rights of the Alwar kinship elite was declining, but had not disappeared. Administrative participation had passed to the bureaucracy, but the degree of traditional power of the *thakurs* was uncertain. Their customary interaction with the young English-educated raja was unlikely and their own education was such that their re-entry into the administration seemed nearly impossible. The institution of a regular land settlement in the *jagir* villages was a radical step which

the officials were unwilling to undertake, even while the *jagirdars'* status was being attacked in other areas.

For Maharaja Jai Singh, held almost imprisoned at Mayo College, the frustration at his separation from his state and powers began to grow. He repeatedly pressed for British permission for his return to his state, if not to immediate authority. In September 1897 Jai Singh was finally allowed to leave Ajmer and return to Alwar. The Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana had resigned himself to the fact that little good would be accomplished by keeping the young ruler at the College against his will.<sup>13</sup>

Four years after his return to Alwar, Maharaja Jai Singh began to be given limited administrative responsibility within the state. In September 1901 the Council gave him control over the Irregular Forces and all files concerning the *jagirdari* troops now went to him rather than to the appropriate Councillor for orders. He was also encouraged to offer comments on other cases before the Council.<sup>14</sup> Early the following year, he was assigned further duties when five other departments (including such vital state functions as the supervision of the carts belonging to the *darbar*) were transferred to his control. More importantly, he was granted limited magisterial powers and was allowed to hear minor cases under the supervision of a member of the State Council.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, the Council began to encounter difficulties in dealing with its subordinate officials, as it had no definite power over their promotion or appointment: final decision in these areas still lay with the Political Agent. This power had been retained by the Agent in an earlier period when the Council had been considered untrustworthy, that is dominated by *jagirdars*. By 1903, however, the balance had shifted in favour of bureaucratic interests and new rules were promulgated which gave the Council final authority in all appointments and promotions in positions with salaries less than one hundred rupees per month. This included most of the state administration. Examinations were also prescribed for all positions, with an expressed preference for Alwar residents who were not related to any other official in the department to which they sought appointment. This desire for Alwar residents was not, however, fulfilled; most appointments—especially the important ones—continued to go to imported officials. Security in office was provided by the same rules, which set conditions for advancement in state service, punishment in cases of misbehaviour, and a

systematized retirement scheme. These rules were intended to draw the entire bureaucracy under the centralized control of the Council and to make that body the focus of all administrative cohesiveness in Alwar.<sup>16</sup>

The reorganization of the State Council and the government offices climaxed the trend toward bureaucratization which had been under way since the 1870s. During the minority of Maharaja Jai Singh the Council's earlier power was diffused downward, either to individual ministers or into the growing state bureaucracy. While retaining some sensitivity to the traditional rights and concerns of the *jagirdars*, the Alwar government had come truly to represent only the norms and values of late Victorian administrative rationality. Gradually the senior *jagirdars* were phased out of the Council and out of power and were thereby displaced in their role as sharers in the political system, a position they felt had been institutionalized by their rebellions in 1858 and 1870. Under Mungul Singh even the authority of the raja passed to the imported bureaucrats who, with the support of the Political Agents, effected a wide range of reforms in the state. The changes which continued during Jai Singh's minority aimed to organize and bureaucratically diffuse authority, while reshaping the state and its administration along European lines. The reorganized State Council of 1903 retained two *thakúrs*, but the head of the body was a professional bureaucrat, Balmokand Das. Even education seems to have become less important for determining *jagirdari* administrative ability, for, while Thakur Madho Singh of Bijwar had set many academic records at Mayo College, his duties as a Councillor were minor. The continued importance of Thakur Durjan Singh of Jaoli in the body suggests that a lack of traditional status was important. Jaoli was a Naruka *jagir*, but a subordinate family. Its actual status as a *jagir* was often questioned and many of the senior *jagirdars* challenged Jaoli's right to a share in the state polity. Bijwar, on the other hand, was a senior *Bara Kotri* estate, politically active, and with a strong historical claim to administrative participation. The significant tasks assigned to Madho Singh of Bijwar related only to the Alwar *jagirs*, and some of this duty had been transferred to the young ruler as an object lesson in state administration. Most of the Alwar decision making was carried out by the bureaucracy, led by an imported official and a *thakur* of questionable status, without reference to either the raja or the *jagirdars*, the customary co-sharers of power in Alwar. With the



deemphasis of both the *jagirdari* troops and the State Council, the new bureaucrats had removed the means by which the *thakurs* had symbolized and sustained their power in the last half of the nineteenth century. At the same time, they had been left carefully undisturbed on their individual estates in the exercise of their local authority.

While the Alwar *jagirdars* had been relieved of their traditional influence, the power of the Maharaja had also experienced a change. The young Jai Singh was no longer able to utilize the support of his Naruka kinsmen to legitimize his authority within the state. In much the same manner that the *thakurs* had been supplanted by the administrators, the power of the ruler was lost to such senior bureaucrats as Balmokand Das. These new classes derived their legitimacy in turn, from the paramount power which, in its desire for 'reform', had altered the political basis of the Rajput state. If the co-operative authority of the raja and the *jagirdars* was to be restored in independence of the bureaucracy, then some new institutionalization of the customary modes of co-operation and mutual legitimization would have to be found.

### III

When the British introduced externally-recruited bureaucrats into Alwar, questions dominated their worries : Would the new administrative changes survive a raja with ruling powers? Could the new administrators maintain themselves in such a position? There was never any consideration of the effects this indirect rule would have on the traditional polity of the state. There was no concern over what power, if any, would be left to the raja, or whether there was to be any role for the *jagirdars*, his kinsmen, co-sharers in his power, and legitimizers of his authority.

When Maharaja Jai Singh received ruling power in Alwar, it became necessary for him to find a base for his power, a group of supporters within the state. Like Sheodan Singh after the expulsion of the Delhi Dewans, Jai Singh looked to disenfranchised groups which he could use to counterbalance the strength of usurpers who had the support of the British raj. But Sheodan Singh's usurpers were Jai Singh's allies, the Alwar *jagirdars*. It was necessary for the Alwar ruler to find some way to reincorporate the kinship elite into the revised Alwar political system. He also believed in the necessity of personal administrative participation by the modern Rajput

ruler. He had met this litany many times during his studies at Mayo College and he seems to have accepted it as his duty actively to oversee all aspects of the administration of his state. His desire for personal participation inevitably brought him into conflict with bureaucrats who believed the Maharaja should act only as a general executive and should not seek involvement in decision making or attempt to place his own candidates in positions of administrative importance.

Since his return to Alwar from Mayo College in 1897, Jai Singh had been deprived of effective power within the state and all authority had been retained by the bureaucracy, the Council, and the Political Agent. He quickly came to resent this isolation and began to press for his unrestricted ruling power. His desire coincided with the British view that the age of majority ought not be delayed any longer than absolutely necessary, as such delay would only create discontent in a young chief, whose English education would already threaten to alienate him from his people. Any postponement would also encourage intrigue in the government.<sup>17</sup> As the end of Jai Singh's minority approached, his desire to take over the Alwar administration proved troublesome to the British Agent and, since it was feared his ambitions might later disturb the carefully-constructed bureaucracy, the Government of India decided to place restrictions on the powers that would be transferred. It was stipulated that no administrative institutions or appointments could be altered without the approval of the Political Agent, whose sanction was also required for the annual state budgets (which restricted the ruler's personal expenditure). As a general safeguard, the young Maharaja was cautioned not to act against the advice of the Political Agent in any important matter.<sup>18</sup> On 10 December 1903 Maharaja Jai Singh was formally invested with ruling power by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon.<sup>19</sup>

Alterations in the Alwar administration continued during the early reign of Jai Singh, when for the first time since 1875 a ruler in Alwar actively strove to exercise his power. While Mungul Singh had been content to leave the conduct of large and small administrative matters in the hands of the Council and the growing bureaucracy, Jai Singh sought a personal role in the state and its government. Whether this desire grew out of quirks of personality or a sincere feeling of duty to his state, the result was to bring the young Maharaja into growing competition with the bureaucracy. In the

rationalized administration, no role had been defined for an absolute ruler and Jai Singh's position, like that of his traditional *jagirdari* supporters, became increasingly vague. In attempting to reinvolve himself and his office in the daily affairs of state, he had to find a place for the old polity in the new institutions. Facing him was a confident bureaucracy which still depended largely on British sanction for its tenure.

The first recorded instance of active Council interference in internal *jagir* matters came in 1902 when the body acted to restrict the important Garhi *jagirdar's* extension of irrigation in his estate without permission. Around 1895, Thakur Karan Singh had constructed a canal to bring river water to one of his seven villages. The Council ordered the destruction of this canal, since the diversion of the water to Garhi was reducing the productivity of other non-*jagirdari* lands further downstream, villages which paid taxes directly to the durbar. While it is not clear from the existing records what action was finally taken, the sources indicate that the Naruka *thakur* was, at the least, severely encouraged to close the unauthorized canal.<sup>20</sup> Even this slight interference in the affairs of an important *Bara Kotri jagir* was unusual and in an earlier Council, more responsive to *jagirdari* interests, it would have been carefully avoided. This increasing desire of the bureaucracy to intervene in questions of landholding rights can also be seen in the decision in November 1904 that the council would no longer consider cases of land alienation, as had been required under the rules instituted during the land settlement of 1898-1900. These questions were no longer viewed as sufficiently delicate as to require the action of the Council and the responsibility was transferred to the regular revenue courts of the state, with action outside these channels required only when whole villages or normally excluded classes were involved.<sup>21</sup> Thus the authority for implementing state policies which affected the landholding classes passed from the State Council into the administration, to a cadre which had no accountability to the *thakurs* and who, together with the increasingly bureaucratized Council, showed a growing willingness to interfere in matters which had previously been local *jagirdari* rights, especially landholding rights, the basis of the *jagirdars'* political, military and economic power.

Within a year of Maharaja Jai Singh's accession to the Alwar gaddi, reports began to filter into the Indian press which spoke of corruption in the state and accused both the ruler and the Council

of an unwillingness or inability to deal with the 'dirt-eating' (*gu'khanewale*) officials of the state.<sup>22</sup> The focus of these charges was the son of Balmokand Das, who had been given control of the state commissariat by his father and had apparently exaggerated expenditures and shared the profits with colleagues in the engineering and accounts departments. The British diagnosis was that Jai Singh had been unhappy with Das's unchallenged hold on the administration and had pressed a weak case against his son simply to force the departure of the Councillor.<sup>23</sup> The specifics of the charges and the British reaction are not as important as is the clear sense of resentment which the Maharaja had come to feel over the role which the imported bureaucratic classes had come to play in his state. And, like his father, Jai Singh had found a way to dispose of a troublesome bureaucrat, although it was not necessary for him to hint at Das's murder as Mungul Singh had done with Kunj Behari Lal in 1892. Munshi Balmokand Das had controlled the affairs of the State Council since January 1893 and, with the enthusiastic support of the British, he and the other imported officials had come to monopolize all aspects of the Alwar bureaucracy.

This cadre, in the name of administrative efficiency, had negated the earlier *jagirdari* influence on the Council and, even after Jai Singh's investiture with power, had retained many of the responsibilities which would normally have been the raja's. It is also likely that their hold on the middle and upper positions in the state civil service was resented by the increasing numbers of educated Alwar residents who were graduating from local schools and were returning from colleges in other parts of India. The new graduates found themselves restricted to the lowest administrative positions in their home state. A corollary situation was producing serious problems in other parts of India, when the new Indian intelligentsia began to demand participation in the administration of their country, especially membership in the prestigious Indian Civil Service which had been effectively preserved from Indian entry.<sup>24</sup> From the perspective of the Alwar *jagirdars*, their power had been lost to a bureaucracy which they had no means to influence and which was not only insensitive to their traditional role but actively sought to reduce their authority even within their own estates. The only *thakurs* who remained active in the upper levels of the administration were the two token *jagirdars* on the State Council, Thakur Durjan Singh of Jaoli and Thakur Madho Singh of Bijwar. Even the Council had



experienced a constant diminution of its powers and had been supplanted by the same state bureaucracy which was resented by other groups in the state.

Because of these pressures, Balmokand Das left Alwar state service in July 1905, ostensibly for reasons of health, but it was clearly understood that he would not return to the state.<sup>25</sup> In July of the following year the introduction of a new administrative group began with the transfer of Ganga Sahai to the Alwar Revenue Department from settlement duties in the North-West Frontier Province. The department he was to head had many of its non-agricultural concerns carefully delimited by the recent introduction of a full excise code for the state. Excise had been a favourite field for corruption and so it seems that the reformatory function of the new law was designed to extend beyond official fiscal administration. In October 1906 the removal of the unpopular bureaucrats continued when the head of the Accounts Department was dismissed because of his involvement in the embezzlement by Balmokand Das's son.<sup>26</sup> But while specific individuals were removed from power in Alwar, the position of the bureaucracy was left largely unaffected, as new officials were introduced into the state.

Since the Maharaja's investiture with ruling powers, the Council had become less important. As the Political Agent saw it, the problem arose from the important role the Political Agent had taken during the minority. The exact position of the Council, therefore, had been left undefined. With the transfer of power to the Maharaja, the Council had continued as 'almost a fiction as an executive administrative body', with little power to direct the affairs of the state.<sup>27</sup> Other evidence, however, suggests that the dilution of the Council's earlier authority was as much the result of the conscious activities of the new professional bureaucrats as it was a result of the vacuum left by the removal of the British Agent from his supposed position of absolute power. With Balmokand Das's departure from Alwar, the power of the bureaucratic cadre was weakened. In August 1905 Hamid-uz-Zafar Khan was appointed to fill the Council vacancy; he was to act as senior member of the body, a promotion which overlooked the seniority of the two *jagirdars* already serving in the Council. The new Councillor was a Muslim related to the ruling family of the princely state of Rampur who had been serving in the administration of the United Provinces at the time of his appointment to Alwar.<sup>28</sup> Despite his origins outside the state, the new member of the Council was well liked in

Alwar, especially by the Maharaja. Under his direction the Council began its first tentative revisions of the actions of the Political Agent during the minority, ruling that appeal of these orders was possible and announcing that applications for review would be accepted.<sup>29</sup>

In June and July 1906 the Alwar Council was further reorganized and was amalgamated into the Maharaja's Secretariat under the general supervision of the new State Secretary, Jagmohan Lal. He had come to Alwar from service in Jaipur and, although he was disliked by the British (who continually remarked on his lack of morals), had been given considerable power by Jai Singh. There was general agreement that this reorganization would be more efficient, although the British did not consider the State Secretary, even from an organizational standpoint, to be the best intermediary between the ruler and the Council. At this time a clear definition of the duties of the Councillors was made. Four ministerial benches were recognized on the body, with the individual members to act as ministers: Hamid-uz-Zafar Khan was Revenue Minister, Thakur Durjan Singh of Jaoli was Judicial Minister and dealt with *jagir* matters, and Thakur Madho Singh of Bijwar was Home Minister. A fourth member was added to handle the vaguely-defined Departmental Branch. This was Narain Singh, who had served as guardian to the Maharaja since 1899 and whose duty was to provide additional liaison between the ruler and the Council.<sup>30</sup>

In an attempt to redefine his power vis-a-vis the bureaucracy in Alwar, Maharaja Jai Singh had turned to an old remedy and imported a new group of administrators to counterbalance the established officials. But those state servants who had come to Alwar under British patronage possessed power which was supported by the authority of the paramount power and therefore could not be effectively displaced merely by the introduction of a few new bureaucrats. Matters were complicated by the fact that the ruler had no secure base of power in the state and, without supporters, it would be more difficult to draw the conduct of affairs under his personal control. Therefore, Jai Singh began to look to the traditional supporters of the raja and the raj, to the *jagirdars*.

#### IV

The control of the central administration over the Alwar *jagirdars* had first been extended during Jai Singh's minority and by March 1907 the Maharaja, now with restricted ruling powers, had begun to

consider the reincorporation of the *jagirdars*, his last possible allies, into the state polity through a council of *jagirdars*. The proposed new body would be made up of nine *thakurs* not already active in the state administration (for example, in the State Council), seven to be elected by the *jagirdars* and two to be appointed by the ruler.<sup>31</sup>

Jai Singh explained his interest in the council as a result of his concern over raising the status of the Alwar Rajput community and changing the popular perception of the Rajput as 'an illiterate lazy drunkard, vulgar in manners, void of knowledge of his own Estate, swindled by a kawdar [literally 'coward', the word is probably used here in reference to money-lenders], bankrupt through Extravagance in marriages and deaths and above all with a loathsome hatred for any useful work.' He felt that the way to improve both the Rajputs' character and their image was to introduce them into the state administration. The difficulty arose in that they were generally unfit for such posts and 'most of them would be unwilling to accept them and would like to sit at the top of the roof instead of going up the ladder'.<sup>32</sup> For nearly five years there had been considerable concern over the Thakurs' School which had been established in 1870 specifically for the education of the Alwar *jagirdars*' sons. In 1903-4 these boys comprised only fifteen per cent of the total enrolment in the institution and by 1905-6 they had fallen to nine per cent. Many of the older students in the school were the sons of small landholders or non-*jagirdari* Rajputs, but the largest single group of students were the sons of state officials, who made up sixty-three per cent of the total enrolment in 1905-6. The state administration report regretted that 'it is evident that Jagirdars do not take as much interest as they should in availing themselves of the advantages of this institution'.<sup>33</sup> Despite this apparent lack of interest in the Alwar school for *thakurs*, the practice was continued of annually sending two or three of their sons to Mayo College at Ajmer.<sup>34</sup> In March 1907, Jai Singh met with a group of the Alwar *jagirdars* and presented his proposals for the *Jagir* Council and his hopes that it would oversee an increase in the education and administrative participation of the *thakurs*. He cautioned against the involvement of the bureaucracy and hoped that the Rajput *jagirdars* could be given almost total control over their own affairs. The Maharaja explained his hopes for the council of *jagirdars*:

They wd. with their own influence persuade their brotheren [sic] to supervise over the Jageers more carefully to take real interest in the work.

The [sic] Educate the chatabhaias [younger brothers of *jagirdars*] as much as possible and to give them training in the various branches.

I admit that it may be difficult to get a working committee at the start with such advanced ideas and with a very enlightened training but things would in my own opinion soon change.

They would realize that their *own* interests lie in Educating the Younger generation up to the standard of making good members and under these circumstances no State administration wd. suffer for it if any one did suffer by their mismanagement it would be themselves—and once they realized this one may be sure they wd. not take long in studying self interests and looking after their affairs properly.

This committee wd. be conservative at first but appropriately so as thereby alone will they gain confidence in the Workers.

They have no confidence in a modern highly educated Deputy Collector that would try to impose radical reforms even though they may be for their own benefits. There is no reason as time goes on why better Educated Classes should not be elected into the Committee and gradually it may be a strong body doing good to its own community and sewing the State with some useful work and a sense of duty.<sup>35</sup>

Jai Singh was attempting to generate a group of administrators and supporters who would be loyal to him alone and depend solely on him as lineage head for their position and advancement. The Alwar bureaucracy had been introduced into the state by the British Agents and had carried out a reordering of the administration with British support and without reference to either the Maharaja or the *jagirdars*. From the 1880s and 1890s the *thakurs* had been displaced by external administrators and by the time of Jai Singh's installation in 1903 there was no other class in the Alwar government to whom the young ruler could look for support or loyalty.

Over half of the *jagirdars* attending the meeting in March 1907, when Jai Singh proposed the formation of his *Jagir* Council, were Naruka Rajputs. The only other lineages meaningfully represented were Chauhan and Rathore Rajputs. At the meeting an election was held to determine the seven elected members of the Council and the *thakurs* off Thana, Garhi, Srichandpura, Khora, Para (all *tazimi* Bara Kotri Naruka), Chimraoli (*tazimi* Gaur), and Tasing (*tazimi* Badgujar Sesodia) were selected to serve in the body.<sup>36</sup> These *jagirdars* represented the power elite of the traditional political system in Alwar. Most of them held land either in Rajgarh or Lachmangarh *tehsils* (the most concentrated *jagirdari* areas in the state) and their ancestral holdings had been awarded at the time of the foundation of Alwar or by Jaipur before the Alwar breakaway. The composition of this body does, however, indicate a significant



change in the nature of traditional politics in Alwar: it includes both Naruka and non-Naruka *jagirdars*. Previously, the senior Naruka *thakurs* had refused to accept the right of the other *jagirdars* to participation in the administration, feeling that only kinship ties to the raja could validate such activity. Those elected to the *Jagir* Council represented the elite interests of the combined *jagirdari* class. The opening of the previously closed political system was in part the result of pressure exerted by the junior *thakurs* who had mobilized to obtain political power in the early 1870s. It also represented a perception of common cause among all Alwar *jagirdars* in their attempt to ally with the Maharaja to regain their traditional role in the state polity. Three of those elected to the Council had attended Mayo College, Thakur Daulat Singh of Khora, Thakur Phul Singh of Para, and Thakur Sewai Singh of Chimraolim. They had been sent to the school after the transfer of *jagirs* to them when their fathers had supported Lukhdir Singh's persistent claim to the Alwar gaddi in 1875. Three of the four *Bara Kotri jagirdars* elected came from Para *Thikana* and the other *Bara Kotri* was from Khora *Thikana*.<sup>37</sup> Problems emerged when it was discovered that three of the seven *thakurs* elected already held positions in the state: Thakur Ram Singh of Thana was a *quiladar*, or governor of a fort, Thakur Ganga Singh of Srichandpura was the *Bukshi Fauj*, or commander of *jagirdari* troops, and Thakur Prithi Singh of Tasing held a minor ceremonial state appointment. It was therefore argued by the bureaucracy that, in order to maintain the Maharaja's commitment to minimizing state influence on the *Jagir* Council, these important *jagirdars* would have to be replaced.<sup>38</sup> As Jai Singh's powers were still restricted, any administrative modification such as the formation of a new council would require the approval of the British Agent. This sanction would presumably not be given without the agreement of the State Council and state bureaucracy and any misgivings they might have would thereby quickly transmute themselves into British disapproval of the plan.

The bureaucracy of the Alwar state believed that the *Jagir* Council would be more effective if a general council of twenty *jagirdars* were formed, elected by all *tazimi jagirdars*. They proposed that this body would choose the seven elected members of the working committee, which would then be brought to its full strength of nine by two nominees, one of whom it was felt should be a state servant. After the election of the working committee every three

years, only five of the members would be required to remain in Alwar city on a rotating basis and the others could return to their estates. The Judicial Department also suggested that the general council meet only twice a year, at Holi and Dushera, the two most important holidays.<sup>39</sup> By May 1908 the Alwar professional administrators had begun to argue that the proposed council should not be set up at all because the radical idea was clearly beyond the abilities of the conservative *jagirdars*. Ironically, they suggested that as a step toward the worthy goal of further regulating the Alwar *jagirs*, a new department should be created in the administration which would have the power to oversee all matters relating to the *thakurs*. It was also hoped that with the staff of the department it would be possible 'to get the villages of the *Thikanas* surveyed and regular records prepared so as to place the whole management on a systematic and regular footing. It may be added that the extra cost of survey will be borne by the *Thikanas* concerned.'<sup>40</sup> The Maharaja reluctantly approved this scheme, regretting that the administration felt that the *Jagir* Council was not workable. He realized that without the approval of the state bureaucracy, the British could not be expected to give the necessary sanction. He expressed his hope that the body could be formed soon, before the department became too entrenched, for he realized that 'appointing a *Jagir* Council later on will not be an easy task'.<sup>41</sup>

An interesting aspect of the bureaucratic opposition to this plan for a council of Alwar *jagirdars* is that it was articulated by the Judicial Minister, Thakur Durjan Singh of Jaoli, a *jagirdar* himself. As a graduate of Mayo College and a member of the Alwar Council, the Naruka *thakur* may have come to view his interests more in terms of membership in the bureaucratic elite than through his traditional relationship to his kinship head. Jaoli was a *jagir* of uncertain status and it may not be a coincidence that the old claims were then renewed that the estate was not a *jagir*, but rather a less prestigious *istramdari khalsa* holding which happened to be *tazimi* on account of its size.<sup>42</sup>

The Maharaja had supported the formation of the *Jagir* Council to draw his kinsmen into the state administration and to use them as his only remaining counterbalance to the growing power of the professional bureaucracy. It was an attempt to restore to himself a measure of the traditional power of the ruling lineage elite in Alwar. Those selected to serve on the Council represented the traditionally

powerful *jagirdars* of the state, the *tazimi Bara Kotri* and large *tazimi* non-Naruka lineages. In the end this hope failed because it was the verdict of the state officials that the *thakurs* did not possess the qualifications of education and experience that made for competence in the new modes of administration and Jai Singh did not have the power to overturn their decision. Therefore, the plan for *jagirdari* self-regulation and participation in the government was ironically institutionalized as another branch of the growing state bureaucracy, with no participation by the *thakurs*.

At the same time Jai Singh was pressing for the formation of a council of Alwar *jagirdars*, he came into conflict with the state bureaucracy over the management of irrigation in the state. In 1906, problems had emerged when it was discovered that, since the responsibility for irrigation was divided between the Public Works Department (in its role of constructing and repairing bunds and canals) and the Revenue Department (in its duty of assessing land taxes according to the degree of irrigation), neither department was properly overseeing the state irrigation works.<sup>43</sup> The 1908 monsoon was especially heavy and caused considerable damage to a number of Alwar dams.<sup>44</sup> Inspections in the aftermath of the rains reinforced the awareness of the need for reform in the management of irrigation in the state and a general reorganization of state irrigation under the Public Works Department, was suggested.<sup>45</sup> The state bureaucracy, however, reacted slowly to the important proposal and over the following eight months the case passed through the various departments of government. The Maharaja, whose occasional annotations were added to the growing sheaf of materials, became increasingly frustrated by the apparent inability of the bureaucracy to reach what seemed an obvious solution to an important problem. In August 1910 the original scheme was again raised for consideration by the bureaucracy. Stunned by the overall delay of four years since the first diagnosis of the problem, Jai Singh complained that the question 'has assumed various aspects from time to time whereby it has been considerably delayed. I fear to think, at some expense of state revenue also, due to the loss that otherwise might have been a gain from the Bunds had they been properly managed.'<sup>46</sup> It was not, however, until 1911 that any action was taken to implement the reorganization of the irrigation system in Alwar. The frustrated Maharaja observed that the officers of the state clearly had not been performing their duties very well.<sup>47</sup>

He came to view the professional bureaucrats in Alwar as an actual impediment to smooth administration. His frustration was also symptomatic of the deeper struggle by Jai Singh to assert his role as overseer of the administration of his state, a code of personal involvement constantly impressed upon him at Mayo College as the only just duty of a modern Indian ruler. If he was unable to fulfil this duty, his instructors had told him, he would have betrayed a sacred trust with his subjects and with the Crown.<sup>48</sup> This role met with a modern bureaucracy which had been established with British support and which had no use for an active ruler. To attain his proper position in Alwar, the Maharaja commenced a power struggle with the administrators of the state, although he had no power base from which to act. He attempted to reintroduce his traditional supporters into the government by means of the *Jagir* Council. But with failure of this scheme, Maharaja Jai Singh began simply to ignore the bureaucracy, to turn away from their influence, from what he saw as incompetence and inordinate delay in implementing the most obvious policies.

In his attempts to reincorporate the Alwar *jagirdars* into the state administration, Jai Singh had been countered not only by the bureaucracy but also by the lack of education among the *thakurs*. As an attempted remedy to this shortcoming, the sons of Alwar *jagirdars* continued to be sent to Mayo College in Ajmer. The only *jagirdars* to achieve any significant administrative participation had been educated at the college and that experience was certainly viewed as a necessary prerequisite for the power held by the *thakurs* of Jaoli and Bijwar. From 1904 a large number of Alwar boys were sent to the college and by 1907 there were sixteen students from Alwar there, all sons of major landholders.<sup>49</sup> In February 1906 there was an attempt to improve the quality of training available to the Alwar students at Ajmer, when a new tutor was appointed for them, educated at Allahabad University and a veteran of administrative service in Alwar's Education Department.<sup>50</sup> For those sons of *jagirdars* not sent to Mayo College, the Nobles' School was continued in Alwar. While the single largest category in the school were the sons of government officials (40 per cent in 1907), the sons of the Alwar *thakurs* were encouraged to attend by an increase in stipends for their maintenance.<sup>51</sup>

To foster the entrance of Alwar residents into the state administration the previous state language of Urdu was replaced by Hindi,



on the argument that Hindi was the mother tongue of most of the people in Alwar and that Urdu was a language imposed on the bureaucracy through British influence.<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, Urdu which had previously been taught in the primary schools was replaced by Hindi and examinations were required for all state officials in the new official language.<sup>53</sup> The Maharaja ordered that all state servants be examined in Hindi, those who failed were liable for dismissal. A biographer of Jai Singh later praised him in that under his rule 'the mother-tongue was washed of the stigma of inferiority. Hindi was raised to a high throne placed on a firm pedestal and it achieved the proud status under Royal patronage.'<sup>54</sup> But questions of status and patronage extended far beyond linguistic matters and a new requirement was imposed on those officers who had come to Alwar from British territory, where Urdu continued as the predominant language of local administration. The change in official language increased the chances of most Alwar residents for employment in the bureaucracy, but it also inadvertently discriminated against a sizeable sector of the populace, the Muslims, who had begun to define their religious and cultural identity in terms of the Urdu language.<sup>55</sup>

From 1906 to 1908 a general reorganization of the Alwar administration was carried out and the state civil rules were revised in an attempt to remove possible sources of graft and financial abuse.<sup>56</sup> More importantly, general administrative authority was diffused to the lower levels of the *Mehakma Alia Huzuri* (His Highness' Secretariat), into which the State Council had been amalgamated.<sup>57</sup> In November 1908 the British decided that since the Alwar raja was twenty-six years old the time had come to remove the restrictions which had been imposed on his power five years earlier. Accordingly, on 1 January 1909, all restrictions on Maharaja Jai Singh's power were removed.<sup>58</sup> In December 1901 the continuing reformulation of the bureaucracy was codified by the issue of a set of rules for the *Mehakma Alia Huzuri*. The role of the State Council in the new system was to 'be purely a consultive body which shall assemble when commissioned by His Highness to give opinion on any subject which His Highness desires to take opinion'. No matter could be discussed without the ruler's specific instructions. In essence, the earlier trend toward bureaucratic decentralization was furthered by Jai Singh's attempts to bring the Council under his personal control; the mass of the bureaucracy was able to continue

much as before. The duties of the separate ministries were also formalized: the Civil Minister (Hamid-uz-Zafar Khan) controlled matters of finance, medical establishment, and excise; the Judicial Minister (Thakur Durjan Singh of Jaoli) handled the Alwar civil and criminal courts, police matters, the jails, and the supervision of the schools and municipal committees; the Home Minister (Thakur Madho Singh of Bijwar) was responsible for affairs of the palace and ceremonial matters; and the Army Minister (Thakur Ram Singh of Thana, officiating for Narain Singh who took an extended leave at this time), managed the Alwar Imperial Service Troops, Irregular Forces, and all matters relating to the *jagirdars*. The new fifth member of the Council was Ranjit Singh, the Private Secretary to His Highness. He had previously been Headmaster of the Nobles' School and Accountant-General and now attended the infrequent Council meetings in an *ex officio* role as Jai Singh's personal representative. The powers of the body were reduced, as it was unable to consider matters not specifically given to it by the ruler and even then did not have final authority, so that even the most routine decisions required the ultimate sanction of the raja and the segment of the bureaucracy concerned with the case.<sup>59</sup> This attempt by Jai Singh to strengthen his role in the state administration had the reverse effect and merely destroyed the executive power of the Council, while retaining the individual authorities of the ministries and the bureaucrats concentrated there. Thereby Jai Singh's desire to control his own state was further frustrated.

On 4 August 1911 the Alwar Political Agency was dissolved when the Agent took over joint charge of Jaipur and Alwar and left the state. For the first time since 1870 the state was without a resident British officer.<sup>60</sup> Jai Singh was apparently aware of the role that the Agents had played in the history and administrative development of his state. In 1916 he unsuccessfully pressed for a resolution by the Conference of Ruling Princes and Chiefs which would bar British officers from acting as the president of or serving as a member of any Council formed during the minority of an Indian prince.<sup>61</sup> The question of administrative review of decisions by the Agent during the minority rule was again raised in Alwar in August 1917 and Maharaja Jai Singh conclusively ruled that 'any orders of the Political Agent which on mature consideration are considered defective, can certainly be altered by the reigning Prince in our State'.<sup>62</sup>

## V

Professional bureaucrats were first introduced into Alwar by the British Agents in the 1870s and 1880s to manage the state in the interests of the Empire and to make administrative changes on a scale disallowed to European officers. By using Indian administrators, the Agents were also able largely to bypass the frustrating factional disputes which had plagued the earlier relations between the raja and the *jagirdars*. The entrance of the new classes of imported officials into the political system acted, over time, to displace the *jagirdars* from the positions of power they had gained in their rebellions against Sheodan Singh. Gradually, the departments of the Alwar government extended their control into the *jagir* estates and began to regulate the previously inviolate affairs of the kinship elite. The authority of the raja was also weakened during the minority of Mungul Singh and further absorbed by the bureaucracy during his reign, for he was quite willing to leave all administrative matters with the professionals.

After Maharaja Jai Singh received power in Alwar, he was faced with the necessity of locating a class which could support his power in the state and at the same time carry out the daily administration. During his minority the State Council had consolidated its control over all aspects of the state bureaucracy and had in fact become indistinguishable from that bureaucracy. The *jagirdars* were also displaced from their positions of authority. The two *thakurs* who remained active in the administration were products of Mayo College and, while well educated, they were also conditioned to accept and abet the British-inspired bureaucratization of the Alwar administration and the simultaneous dissolution of the traditional political relations between the raja and the *jagirdars*.

Jai Singh's isolation from administration combined with his frustration over the seeming inability of the bureaucracy to act quickly on matters of important policy. The years he had spend at Mayo College had taught him that a ruler was expected to involve himself personally in the management of his state, that his station implied a great responsibility. If any ruler failed to exercise this strong personal hand in the administration of his domains, then he would betray his subjects, his heritage, and his manhood. But the administrative machinery in Alwar had been formed with no place for the raja and was imbued with lengthy bureaucratic procedures which Jai Singh found frustrating. To strengthen his base in the growing

power struggle, Jai Singh turned to the *jagirdars* for support, for the ideological charter which they had traditionally provided the rajas and which was necessary if he was to reimpose central authority on the Alwar bureaucracy. The *Jagir* Council was also suggested to encourage the educational advancement of the *jagirdars'* sons in the hope that the external bureaucratic clique could be gradually replaced by a modernized version of the customary interaction of kinship elite and lineage head. The entrenched bureaucrats, led by Durjan Singh of Jaoli, were quick to point out the basic questions of administrative competency which such a scheme raised and to suggest the incorporation of institutions to control the *jagirdars* directly into the Alwar bureaucracy. Both the Jaoli *thakur* and the professional administrators must have realized that the institutionalization of the waning *jagirdari* power would lead to their loss of influence, and perhaps employment, in Alwar.

The non-*jagirdari* educated classes were also given preference in admission to state service when the official language was declared to be Hindi rather than Urdu, the administrative language of the adjoining territories under British control. The imported state servants would have to modify their linguistic emphasis or face replacement by Alwar residents. To prepare a new class of administrators, the language of higher education in the state was also changed from Urdu to Hindi. While the intent was to generate a new cadre to be employed in state service, the inferred cultural bias aroused the large Muslim population of Alwar. They were then developing a sub-national consciousness of religious and cultural identity which articulated its Islamic uniqueness partially in terms of Urdu and its Arabic-derived script.

Understandably, the established bureaucrats in Alwar opposed all attempts by the Maharaja to incorporate new administrative classes into the state, as it would endanger both their status and their jobs. Their authority had been sustained by the British and their decisions had been immune to internal pressures as long as they refrained from violating local sensibilities, especially those of the upper classes. By the early twentieth century, however, there was no further reluctance to depose the *thakurs* from their power, and eventually from even their positions on the land. When Jai Singh returned from Mayo College, he brought a view of an enlightened Rajput ruler which conflicted with the independent role which the rationalized bureaucracy had made for themselves in the Alwar



government. The administrators were entrenched in the state with the support of the British raj and its agents in Alwar, who saw a westernized bureaucracy as a convenient instrument to control princely states without the necessity of active British intervention. This overarching bureaucratic power had been obtained and solidified under a British management of Alwar, the minority of a raja, a ruling chief (Mungul Singh) who was unconcerned with matters of state, and the minority of his son. After this series of convenient situations, the Alwar state servants were reluctant to accept a reassertion of the Maharaja's power, in either modern or traditional terms, and retained enough influence to oppose him in his efforts.

The bureaucratization of the Alwar administration left both the Maharaja and the *thakurs* isolated from their roles in government and from the mutual legitimization and support which had existed between the head and elite of the ruling lineage. In the early years of Jai Singh's power in Alwar, attempts were made to restore a version of the old relations between raja and *thakurs*. This was part of the Maharaja's overall attempt to locate or generate a class or classes loyal to him and included efforts to introduce educated Alwar residents into the government and to import new administrators responsible only to the ruler, as well as the proposal for the *Jagir* Council. None of these schemes succeeded in securing the Maharaja's position in the state administration. The *jagirdars* were excluded from political participation both in the institutionalized forms they had achieved in the Alwar Councils since 1858 and in traditional terms. Equally emasculated was the Maharaja, who was prevented from fulfilling either the modern ruler's role which his education had defined or that of the traditional Rajput lineage head. This double feeling of failure must have had a profound psychological effect on Jai Singh of Alwar. As a result, he came generally to ignore the routine administration of his state, to press his influence on the bureaucracy only when it touched matters of his personal privilege or comfort, and to content himself with activity on the Imperial political scene, such as the First Round Table Conference. By the early 1930s Jai Singh had become notorious throughout India and England as the worst among the Maharajas, and in 1933 he was to be expelled from Alwar. In isolation from both the *jagirdars*, his traditional constituents, and the bureaucrats, the nominal servants of the modern Rajput ruler, the Maharaja of Alwar had drifted from a benign to a malevolent absolutism.

## NOTES

1. Thomas Holbein Hendley, *Ulwar and Its Art Treasures*, London, 1888, p. 5.
2. The intricacies of this case are beyond the scope of this chapter. For details, see Alwar (Rajputana), *Proceedings in the Alwar Murder Case, with Copy of Judgement*, Agra, 1893, and C.L. Tupper, comp., *Indian Political Practice: A Collection of the Decisions of the Government of India in Political Cases*, 4 vols., New Delhi, 1974, first published 1895, I, pp. 82-4.
3. Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana [hereafter AGGR] to the Political Agent at Alwar [hereafter PAA], 18 June 1892, National Archives of India, Records of the Rajputana Agency [hereafter RA], 129-Alwar-I (1892) p. 33. Report by Duffadar Nizamuddin on Alwar Murder Case, Alwar, 13 June 1892, RA, 129-Alwar-I (1892), enclosure to P. 34A. PAA to AGGR, 23 June 1892, RA, 129-Alwar-I (1892), p. 49.
4. Deputy Foreign Secretary to the Government of India [hereafter FSGoI] to AGGR, 13 October 1892, RA, 105-Alwar (1892), p. 70. AGGR to FSGoI, 10 August 1892, RA, 105-Alwar (1892), p. 68.
5. *Report on the Administration of the Ulwar State for 1894* [hereafter *Alwar AR*], pp. 5-7. *Alwar AR*, 1896, p. 12. *Lists of Leading Officials, Nobles and Personages in the Native States of India*, 1906, Calcutta, 1906, pp. 2-3.
6. PAA to AGGR, 6 August 1892, RA, 105-Alwar (1892), p. 66. See also *Alwar AR*, 1894, p. 13 and 1895, p. 8.
7. *Alwar AR*, 1896, p. 13. By this time, a clear distinction was made between *jagirdari* forces and the Alwar Imperial Service troops which had been raised for mobilization under British orders in times of crisis.
8. *Alwar AR*, 1896, pp. 20-1. Alwar Council to PAA, 26 February 1897, RA, 105-Alwar (1892), p. 207. PAA to First Assistant to AGGR, 4 March 1897 and 14 February 1898, both in RA, 105-Alwar (1892), pp. 200, 233.
9. Note by Settlement Officer, Alwar and Bharatpur, on *Alwar patwaris*, 16 April 1897, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, Alwar State Records [hereafter ASR], Settlement Department [hereafter SD], 6, pp. 41-2.
10. O'Dwyer was Governor of the Punjab at the time of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919.
11. Note by PAA, 31 July 1898, ASR, SD, 31, p. 32.
12. PAA to First Assistant to AGGR, 16 August 1897, ASR, SD, 31, pp. 87-8.
13. AGGR to Pvt. Sec. to Viceroy [hereafter V], 24 September 1897, Elgin Papers, 213 of 1897-II. AGGR to Pvt. Sec. to V, 3 November 1897, Elgin Papers, 315 of 1897-II.
14. PAA to First Assistant to AGGR, 11 September 1901, National Archives of India, Proceedings of the Foreign Dept of the Government of India, Internal B [hereafter Intl B Progs], May 1902, encl. 1 to 153.
15. PAA to First Assistant to AGGR, 27 March 1902, Intl B Progs, May 1903, encl. 1 to 154.
16. Alwar (Rajputana), *Rules Regulating the Appointments, Punishments, Reductions and Dismissals of the Subordinate Staff in the Alwar State*, Lt. Col. C.F.G. Fagan, comp., Lahore, 1903.
17. AGGR to FSGoI, 29 October 1902, Secret Intl Progs, April 1903, 16.
18. PAA to Jai Singh, 10 December 1903, ASR, Home Dept, 3, pp. 1-2. PAA to

- First Assistant to AGGR, 6 October 1903, RA, 163-Alwar-I (1903), p. 50.
19. See Lord Curzon, *Speeches, 1902-1904*, III, Calcutta, 1904, pp. 244-56.
  20. See PAA to Alwar Council, 9 December 1902; Thakur Karan Singh to Alwar Council, 19 December 1902 and 7 July 1903, all in ASR, Finance Dept, PWD Section, 146.
  21. Order by the Alwar Council on Revising Land Alienation Rules, 19 November 1904, ASR, State Council busta, VII, 91. The earlier rules had prohibited the transfer of land to merchants or other 'non-agricultural' classes.
  22. *Sadiq-ul-Akbar* [Rewari, Urdu weekly], 17 October 1904, in *Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers Published in the Punjab, North-Western Provinces, Oudh and Central Provinces* [hereafter *SVN*], 22 October 1904, p. 250. The translation of *gu khanewale* is from *SVN* it is a free rendering of the less delicate Urdu original.
  23. Note by S.M. Fraser, 22 June 1905, Intl B Progs, August 1905, KW 21-4. See also *Sadiq-ul-Akbar*, 2 July 1905, in *SVN*, 15 July 1905, p. 193.
  24. It is interesting that many nationalists pointed to the princely states as the only place in India where Indian administrators could find high-level employment. This ignored the fact that the importation of bureaucrats resulted in the exclusion of the educated classes of the states.
  25. *Alwar AR*, 1905-6, p. 1. AGGR to FSGoI, 31 May 1906, Intl B Progs, July 1906, KW 1, 95-6.
  26. *Alwar AR*, 1905-6, p. 2. *Alwar Excise Code 1907, Act No. 1 of 1907: An Act to Amend the Law Relating to Excise Revenue*, Alwar, 1908, introduction.
  27. PAA to First Assistant to AGGR, 25 June 1906, Intl A Progs, August 1906, encl. 1-142.
  28. *Alwar AR*, 1905-6, p. 1. *Lists of Leading Officials ... 1906*, p. 3.
  29. Note by Alwar Council on Review of Decisions during the Minority, 22 August 1917, ASR, Finance Dept, 27.
  30. Jai Singh to PAA, 3 June 1906, encl. with PAA to First Assistant to AGGR, 25 June 1906, Intl A Progs, August 1906, encl. 1-142. *Alwar AR*-1905-6, p. 1. *Lists of Leading Officials, Nobles and Personages in the Principal Native States in Rajputana: Corrected up to June 1909*, Calcutta, 1910, pp. 3-4.
  31. Memo by Jai Singh on meeting with Alwar *jagirdars*, 7 March 1907, ASR, Judicial Dept, 15, pp. 7-9.
  32. Memo by Jai Singh on *Jagir Council*, 16 March 1907, ASR, Judicial Dept, 16, pp. 1-3.
  33. *Alwar AR*, 1904-5, p. 57 and also pp. 55-9. *Alwar AR*, 1905-6, pp. 23-4.
  34. *Report on the Mayo College, Ajmer, Rajputana, for 1904-5*, Ajmer, 1905, pp. 15-16.
  35. Memo by Jai Singh on *Jagir Council*, 16 March 1907, ASR, Judicial Dept, 16, pp. 4-5. Spelling and punctuation are Jai Singh's.
  36. See the report on the attendance at the meeting of Alwar *jagirdars* at the Lansdowne Palace, Alwar, 7 March 1907. ASR, Judicial Dept, 16, appendices A-C. *Tazim* indicates the traditional right to be received in formal court by the Maharaja while he was standing. This honour was awarded to close kinsmen of the ruling lineage and to powerful non-kinsmen.
  37. These were two of the most important and politically active branches of the *Bara Kotri jagirdars*.

38. Memo, Judicial Dept to Jai Singh, 16 January 1908, ASR, Judicial Dept, 16, pp. 25-7.
39. Ibid., pp. 28-35.
40. Memo, Judicial Dept to Jai Singh, 27 May 1908, ASR, Judicial Dept, 15, p. 1; see also pp. 2-27.
41. Note by Jai Singh, 28 May 1908, ASR, Judicial Dept, 15, p. 29.
42. The conflicting claims, and an overview of this dispute, are in Alwar (Rajputana), *Thikana Jaoli*, Allahabad. [1925].
43. *Alwar AR*, 1905-6, p. 7 and 1906-7, p. 7.
44. [India, Rajputana Agency], *Breaches in Irrigation Tanks in Rajputana during the Rains of 1908*, Ajmer, 1909, p. 28.
45. State Engineer to Alwar Council, 6 November 1909, ASR, Finance Dept, PWD Section, 147, pp. 1-3. This reorganization would, predictably, have included an increase in the salary of the state engineer as compensation for his new responsibilities.
46. Note by Jai Singh, 15 August 1910, ASR, Finance Dept, PWD Section, 147, pp. 24c-24e. See also Finance Minister to State Engineer, 26 July 1910, ASR, Finance Dept, PWD Section, 147, p. 17, and Note by Chief Revenue Officer, 13 August 1910, ASR, Finance Dept, PWD Section, 147, p. 19.
47. Note by Jai Singh, 29 March 1911, ASR, Finance Dept, PWD Section, 147, p. 46m.
48. The importance of a ruler's personal involvement in the administration of his state was a lesson frequently repeated at the college. Many articles on this theme appear in the *Mayo College Magazine*. The nature and result of education at the princes' colleges need to be carefully examined.
49. *Report on the Mayo College, Ajmer, Rajputana for 1906-07*, Ajmer [1908], pp. 2-18. See also *Mayo College Magazine*, 1904-8. Every issue lists students joining or leaving the college during that quarter.
50. *Mayo College Magazine*, February 1906, pp. 9-10.
51. *Alwar AR*, 1906-7, pp. 27-8.
52. In the 1901 census, 49.8 per cent of Alwar's population were listed as speaking Hindi as their mother tongue; only 0.9 per cent were listed for Urdu. Only 2.8 per cent of Alwar residents were literate, but of these 88.5 per cent were literate in Hindi and 3.2 per cent in Urdu.
53. *Alwar AR*, 1907-8, p. 2. *Rajasthan District Gazetteers*, vol. VI, *Alwar*, Jaipur, 1968, p. 580.
54. Bhim Sen Khosla, *The Modern Rajput Hero: Sir Jey Singh Ji Maharaja of Alwar (1882-1937)*, Alwar and Delhi, 1937, pp. 104-6.
55. In the census of 1901, 0.7 per cent of Alwar's Muslims were returned as literate, of which 24.3 per cent claimed literacy in Urdu. Only 357 Hindus (0.05 per cent) claimed literacy in Urdu as a mother tongue. The single largest language of literacy among Alwar's Muslims was the local Rajasthani dialect, Mewati (40.5 per cent), but Urdu had come to be identified with religious-cultural identity.
56. *Alwar AR*, 1906-7, p. 2, and *Alwar State Civil Rules*, Alwar [1908].
57. *Alwar AR*, 1907-8, pp. 1-2.
58. AGGR to Jai Singh, 27 December 1908, ASR, Home Dept, 3, pp. 5-6.
59. *Mehakma Alia Huzoree Rules of the Alwar State* [Alwar, 1909]. See also



- Alwar AR*, 1907-8. Appendix I, and *Lists of Leading Officials* . . . 1909, p. 5
60. *Alwar AR*, 1910-11, pp. 1-2.
61. *Proceedings of the Conference of Ruling Princes and Chiefs, 1916*, New Delhi [1917], pp. 55-6.
62. Note by Jai Singh, 27 August 1917, ASR, Finance Dept, 27.

# 2

## HYDERABAD The Mulki–Non-Mulki Conflict

KAREN LEONARD

The collapse of Hyderabad state in 1948 has continued to puzzle observers of Indian politics. As the largest of the princely states in both size and population, why did the state not engage more actively and constructively in the political conflicts which ended in partition and independence for India and Pakistan in 1947?<sup>1</sup> Why, in particular, did the Nizam of Hyderabad not build upon a promising indigenous cultural nationalist movement, the Mulki movement, to negotiate or fight more successfully for autonomy?<sup>2</sup>

Hyderabad's limited political goals and achievements in the crucial pre-independence decades were rooted in the Mulki–non-Mulki conflict, which began in the nineteenth century. Mulkis were countrymen, citizens of Hyderabad; non-Mulkis were outsiders, men brought in to reform the Hyderabad government. An understanding of the process of administrative modernization and its relationship to vigorous cultural and political movements in the twentieth century clarifies the crucial role of the Mulki–non-Mulki conflict in the 'series of astonishing miscalculations'<sup>3</sup> of the Nizam and the Diwani bureaucracy in the 1940s, miscalculations which led to the state's incorporation into India. This analysis begins with the Diwanship of Salar Jung in the mid-nineteenth century, because both administrative modernization and the Mulki–non-Mulki conflict began then; it moves through two more historical periods to show the changing social composition of the groups competing for political power, and the increasingly differential rates of administrative and political modernization in the state.

In the first stage, from 1853 to 1883, the efforts of the Diwan Salar Jung to modernize the administration required men trained in British India. They established an Anglo-Indian bureaucracy and became a new social category, non-Mulkis, in the city; the Diwan successfully denied them political power.

During the second stage, from 1884 to 1911, the non-Mulki administrators seized political power while Mulkis tried to gain administrative positions. The Diwani administration became a largely autonomous bureaucracy, constituting itself as an elite and generating its own behavioural norms. No longer checked by the Nizam, the Diwan, or powerful nobles, it made decisions which affected the structure of Hyderabad society. The Mughlai bureaucracy was effectively dismantled and its personnel disinherited at all levels. The educational and professional differences between Mulkis and non-Mulkis did not lessen. The non-Mulki Diwani officials devised regulations which would perpetuate their continued dominance of the Diwani administration and allow their descendants to claim positions as Mulkis. The accelerated modernization and expansion of the bureaucracy after 1884 only enhanced its political power and retarded other processes of political development.

In the third period, from 1911 to 1948, there were three major developments within Hyderabad state. First was the broadening of the Mulki category to include men from the Hyderabad districts, accompanying the extension of effective administration to the rural areas of the state. But the professional, social, and political integration of these district Mulkis was only partial. Second, the government continued to concentrate only on administrative modernization, not political modernization.<sup>4</sup> The Nizam and his officials confined their goals to the efficient performance of minimal government functions: the collection of taxes, the maintenance of law and order, and the provision of limited public services (education, communication, and transport facilities). They did not formulate a concept of government as representative of the state as a whole, and they made no commitment to the development of governmental institutions or political organizations which could broaden participation in decision-making. Although the Hyderabad administration in the twentieth century was more modernized than many have thought, its political vision was limited, and more importantly, it continued to be controlled by non-Mulkis.

The third crucial development in this period was the establishment of Osmania University and the cultural nationalism it produced. The non-Mulki administrators intended the inauguration of this Urdu-medium university in 1918 to advance administrative modernization, but scholars there created and elaborated upon two

political ideologies which dominated intellectual and political discussion in the capital city during the crucial decade preceding Indian independence. These ideologies, a concept of Deccani nationalism supported by Mulki Hyderabadis and a concept of Muslim sovereignty in the Deccan supported initially by non-Mulki Muslims, allowed the reinterpretation of the long-standing insider-outsider conflict along communal lines and dealt a death blow to the indigenous Mulki movement.

These essentially cultural ideologies inspired a fervour which obscured the political realities confronting Hyderabad state. Both were elitist views, still focused upon the administration and its political control of the state. An ideological controversy between two Urdu-speaking groups helped blind members of both to the pressure for political participation from the non-Urdu speaking rural population of the state. In the Hyderabad districts, western-educated activists were building mass political organizations directly linked to nationalist organizations in British India. They pressed for responsible government and civil liberties within Hyderabad state, using the term Mulki and asking for greater Mulki participation. But these Mulkis in the districts did not share the cultural assumptions of the Deccani nationalist movement, and the political leadership of the two Mulki movements never fully coalesced. Also, in this third stage, the non-Mulki administrators secured the firm support of the Nizam, whose chief interests lay in administrative efficiency and the maintenance of law and order.

### *I. The Diwan as Mediator of Political and Administrative Conflict*

The policies and practices of the Diwan Salar Jung, effective ruler of the state from 1853 to 1883, initiated both the original Mulki-non-Mulki distinction and the modernizing administration. When Salar Jung became Diwan in 1853, Hyderabad was in desperate financial straits, and the British Indian government threatened to take over the state through loans, cession of land, or direct administration. To preserve Hyderabad's independence, the young Diwan had to modernize the Mughlai revenue system and bureaucracy, both to achieve financial stability and to meet British criticism of its corruptions and inefficiencies. The strategy he adopted was to construct a new (or Diwani) administration, utilizing British advice,



administrative practices, and knowledgeable personnel from outside Hyderabad. The revenue system was his first concern, especially the substitution of salaried collectors for the revenue contractors, including many bankers and military men, who controlled the land revenue.

Salar Jung has gone down in history as the 'modernizer' of Hyderabad, but he was from the old ruling class of predominantly North Indian Muslims and Hindus who had settled in the Deccan in the eighteenth century, and his modernization efforts were in fact limited. He did begin to construct the new Diwani administration, but he also preserved the Mughlai institutions, their personnel, and the nobility of Hyderabad state.<sup>5</sup> The persistence of these traditional elements might be thought limiting to the Diwan's own power, but he used them to fend off direct British interference and to check the new class of administrators brought into Hyderabad to run the Diwani administration.

Salar Jung required a British-trained group of Indian administrators to carry out bureaucratic modernization. Such men had to come, at least initially, from outside Hyderabad. Indians with British training and experience were recruited, primarily after 1869 when the death of the Nizam Afzal-uddaula and the minority status of the heir gave Salar Jung as regent more power to institute administrative changes.<sup>6</sup> Salar Jung recruited many of these men personally, sometimes accepting advice from the Resident or the Government of India. Most were English-educated, though a few did not know English. There were Parsis and Hindus among them, and some Europeans as well, but most were Muslims and most were from North India. After the Mutiny of 1857, with the Mughal administration in Delhi finally abolished, many Delhi Muslims took jobs in Hyderabad. Others came upon retirement from British administrative service, and their relatives followed them. Some of the Muslim newcomers were associated with Syed Ahmed Khan and his newly-founded Aligarh Muslim University, and Aligarh became a major source of recruitment in the 1870s.<sup>7</sup> The group was almost immediately termed 'non-Mulki', although the term 'Hindustani' was also used because of the predominance of North Indians.

The Diwan understood that the importation of British Indian administrative practices and personnel could have significant cultural and political impact upon Hyderabad society. Like many of

his class in Hyderabad, he was personally opposed to the cultural changes accompanying western education and the use of English elsewhere in India, and his major goal was to preserve Hyderabad's Mughlai political traditions and culture.<sup>8</sup> Therefore he developed policies to prevent and control change, policies designed to keep the Hyderabad nobles, the new administrators, and British officials isolated from each other, from the Nizam, and from political power as centralized in the Diwan.

Salar Jung made every effort to deny the non-Mulki Diwani employees access to traditional sources of power in Hyderabad, and he tried not to draw too heavily on any one source of recruits. Diwani employees were accorded no official standing at court. They received salaries, not hereditary stipends or *mansabs*; they commanded no troops; they received no *jagirs* (land grants) or titles. To ensure the political isolation of the newcomers, the Diwan issued regulations forbidding Diwani officials to visit the Resident or important nobles without special permission from the Diwan.<sup>9</sup> He viewed the newcomers as mere employees and outsiders, men who 'should on no account have anything to do with his private affairs or with the Royal palace', and whom 'he wished to utilize . . . in administrative matters only . . .'<sup>10</sup>

Only Hyderabadis were entrusted with particularly important political responsibilities, positions which should have functioned as part of the Diwani administration. Men from Salar Jung's own *jagir* headed the new Accountancy and Treasury positions. They used the old Mughlai accounting system and worked under his close supervision. Another Hyderabad was chosen to reorganize the Customs Department, a major source of revenue and an influential post in urban government. A hereditary Mughlai *serrishtahdar* was entrusted with organization of a new Regular Force for the Nizam's military, an undertaking opposed by the British.<sup>11</sup> And Salar Jung's choice for an English-speaking *vakil* to represent him to the Resident was a locally-born Tamilian, a man intensely disliked by many North Indian Muslims.<sup>12</sup>

The Diwan sharply resisted administrative innovations which threatened Hyderabad's court culture. He disagreed vigorously with some North Indian Muslims who urged that Urdu replace Persian as the language of administration.<sup>13</sup> When Salar Jung chose an English tutor for the young Nizam, an appointment long urged by the Resident, he did so with great apprehension.<sup>14</sup>

Salar Jung strove to avoid opposition from the Nizam, the nobility, and the old Mughlai officials as he constructed a modern Diwani administration. Political expediency prevented him from dismantling the Mughlai bureaucracy or displacing its hereditary personnel, though the newer structures and personnel gradually took over the functions of the older Mughlai offices. He was particularly careful in his treatment of the nobility, some of whom were his strongest rivals for power within the state. Viewing the nobles as threats to the centralization of power by the Diwan, Salar Jung believed that their exercise of political power had been disastrous for the state.<sup>15</sup> But he also believed that the nobles were the living representatives of the court culture and political traditions of Hyderabad, and Salar Jung wished to preserve them in that role. The policy of separation between the new administrative personnel and the nobles accomplished both goals. First, it kept the Diwani administration free from intrigue and under his own control; second, it preserved the values and traditions of old Hyderabad.<sup>16</sup> Thus the social and ceremonial life of the court continued to flourish, despite a demonstrable and increasing erosion of the nobles' political power in the state.

The Diwani's general policy of restricting political and social contacts between the new Diwani officials, the nobles, and English officials promoted the development of two separate societies in the city. This contrasted with social life in the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries, when individual Europeans and early British Residents had adapted themselves to Hyderabad society.<sup>17</sup> After the 1820s, the increasing exercise of power by the British Indian government caused its local representatives to be more restricted in their contacts with Hyderabad nobles and officials. The Diwans immediately preceding Salar Jung had denied the Resident access to members of the nobility to prevent intrigue and interference,<sup>18</sup> and Salar Jung continued and reinforced this policy from 1853 until his death in 1883.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the regulation of social contacts, there was a strong prohibition on British entry into the old walled city. The consideration advanced, in view of the armed and unruly Irregular Forces, was the safety of Europeans there.<sup>20</sup> Another consideration was the insulation of the nobility and the court from English political and cultural influence. In fact, the insularity of the old city and its inhabitants provided politically useful arguments for Salar Jung. Just as the British did not enter the walled city, nobles seldom left

it.<sup>21</sup> Salar Jung was especially solicitous of the Paigah nobles (the leading Muslim noble family) and the ladies of the royal household. Both households were strongholds of conservatism, and upon occasion Salar Jung presented them as obstacles to Residency proposals.<sup>22</sup> On several controversial issues during his thirty-year Diwanship, Salar Jung forestalled reform measures urged by successive Residents by citing cultural backwardness on the part of the Nizam or nobles.<sup>23</sup>

Since the British and the new Diwani officials were denied access to the Mughlai culture and its leading representatives, they became allies, for both structural and cultural reasons. The Diwani officials had been brought into Hyderabad to construct a modern bureaucracy. They were constrained by a strong Diwan, a powerful traditional aristocracy, and a Nizam secluded with his palace retainers. Many of the non-Mulki administrators came from the Indian Civil Service, an institution with its own elitist values, and the Hyderabad Diwani administration was modelled upon the British Indian administration. In some respects the non-Mulki department secretaries in Hyderabad had even more power than did their counterparts in British India.<sup>24</sup> These administrators were familiar with the modernizing policies of British India and their implementation, and they were aware of the developments occurring in other Indian states. There was an impatience with the obstacles to modernization so well personified by elder members of the Hyderabad nobility.

The non-Mulkis also shared cultural orientations which set them apart from traditional Hyderabad society and drew them to the British officials. In Hyderabad, they were confronted with a civic culture which they judged to be a regional and inferior version of the Mughal heritage then disintegrating in British India. Most had had an English language education. That, and their careers in the British Indian service, gave them a common distaste for the 'antiquated Urdu' and old-fashioned ways of Hyderabadis.<sup>25</sup> The barriers between the newcomers and the Mughlai official class had been reinforced by other factors. The new men tended to settle outside the crowded old city, in suburbs near the Residency and beyond it.<sup>26</sup> As the numbers of western-educated non-Mulki officials grew in the city, the Residency society proved attractive to them, and there were continual attempts to modify the restrictive social regulations.<sup>27</sup>

Salar Jung's policies largely succeeded in insulating the inhabit-



ants of the old city from the English-oriented culture developing in the new city and Secunderabad, but some counter tendencies at the level of the nobility brought primarily Muslim nobles into contact with non-Mulki officials. Salar Jung's initial efforts had been to keep the Diwani administration and the nobility apart, but he soon found that nominal association of respected nobles with the new administration helped win the support of the public and of the nobility as a class. In 1869 he appointed some young nobles 'Ministers' of Diwani departments, partly 'to consult the feelings of the *jagirdars* and other nobles who might object to the innovation of receiving orders from persons who were not connected with the nobility . . .',<sup>28</sup> and partly to instruct nobles in practical administration, although 'as these gentlemen were not very experienced, able secretaries were given to them'.<sup>29</sup> In fact, it was the non-Mulki secretaries who directed the departments, but the compromise brought together some non-Mulki officials and particular nobles.

Another small but important area of integration was in educational institutions. Salar Jung established the Dar ul Ulum in 1856, an oriental college affiliated to Punjab University,<sup>30</sup> and the Madrasa-i-Aliya in 1873, a private school emphasizing western education, in his own palace for his sons and other young nobles.<sup>31</sup> In 1873 the Madrasa-i-Aizza, with a more traditional curriculum, opened in the old city and enrolled nobles and palace dependents.<sup>32</sup> The Diwan personally selected and encouraged some promising young nobles for further education and administrative apprenticeships.<sup>33</sup> Thus a few young members of the Hyderabad nobility began to associate with non-Mulkis and the Diwani administration. Again, the dominance of Muslims in both the old nobility and the non-Mulki group gave them better access to the new administration.

In this first stage, then, the framework of a modernizing bureaucracy was established and a non-Mulki group of administrators was imported into Hyderabad state. The deliberate attempts of the Diwan to institutionalize the Mulki and non-Mulki groups in two separate administrative and social spheres in the city largely succeeded. Direct conflict between these two administrations was avoided by allowing the Mughlai structures and their Mulki personnel to continue functioning, and by continuing the ceremonial life of the court. Another important fact was that sizeable geographic and administrative divisions remained outside the jurisdiction of the

Diwani administration. Only half of the land in Hyderabad was *Khalsa*, or public, under the Diwani revenue administration; the other half was privately administered by *jagirdars*, tributary rulers, and the Nizam. The Nizam's personal estate had its own large administrative structure which retained Mughlai practices and personnel.<sup>34</sup> The Diwani administration was thus one of several competing administrative and political institutions, and Salar Jung used them to check each other throughout his long career as Diwan.

## *II. The Non-Mulki Administrators Seize Political Power in Hyderabad*

With Salar Jung's sudden death in 1883, the Diwani administrators became politically dominant, and conflicts broke out among non-Mulkis and between non-Mulkis and Mulkis. The gradual consolidation of the new Diwani administration and the central political position of the Diwan had created a possibility Salar Jung could not have foreseen: should a future Diwan become the ally or puppet of the non-Mulki officials, power would pass decisively to the Diwani administration and its non-Mulki administrators.

For one year, from 1883 to 1884, a Council of Regency ruled until the young Nizam Mahbub Ali Khan turned eighteen and could be enthroned. A new Diwan was to be recognized at the same time, and this was a critical selection, for the young Nizam was still a minor, more interested in sports than in studies, and he was not likely to be an effective check upon the administration. The choice of the next Diwan became a matter of lively contention. Salar Jung's young son and an elderly Hindu nobleman were the leading candidates. Non-Mulki Muslim officials and members of the old Hyderabad nobility battled openly on many issues through their representatives on the Council of Regency during that year, and British indecisiveness sharpened their conflicts. But the Government of India finally chose to support the western-educated candidate, the twenty-one-year-old Salar Jung II, who was backed by the non-Mulki officials;<sup>35</sup> thus it was Salar Jung's own son through whom the non-Mulkis seized power in Hyderabad.

Paradoxically, a more open and integrative social life was an immediate and welcome result of the installation of the young Nizam and almost equally young Diwan. Connections between the non-Mulki administrators and the social order in Hyderabad had

initially been weak, but freed from the former restrictions, Diwani officials and the younger generation of Hyderabad nobles participated together in the English-oriented culture of the new city and Secunderabad, in marked contrast to the days of Salar Jung I.<sup>36</sup> Some members of the nobility, both Muslim and Hindu, began to acquire western education and participate in the modernizing society, primarily for social reasons. Some of the enthusiasm carried over into Persian and Urdu literary societies and other voluntary associations in the old city as well. For a brief time at the close of the nineteenth century, a vigorous and eclectic Hyderabadi society seemed to be developing, in which all men of some wealth and standing could participate.<sup>37</sup>

But Salar Jung II and his Diwani department secretaries took political actions which proved divisive. They were determined to carry forward the modernization of the state, and they now had the means to do so. Almost all major reductions of Mughlai civil and military positions occurred after 1884, rather than in the time of Salar Jung I. As the cumulative result of thirty years of reorganization, almost all of the Mughlai *mansabdars* and other servants had become concentrated in old-fashioned Mughlai units, such as the Nizam's personal estate and the Irregular Military Forces. From 1883 to 1885, the Mansab Department was merged into the Accountant General's office; a Managing Board was established for the Nizam's estate; the Irregular Forces were merged with the Regular Forces; and a Court of Wards was established to supervise the estates of nobles and *jagirdars* when legitimate heirs were disputed or under age.<sup>38</sup> Even inside the palace, long-standing practices were ignored and new regulations enforced; and the young Diwan took on a North Indian Muslim and a European as his private secretaries.<sup>39</sup> Traditionally powerful groups found their positions insecure and their political power usurped.

The replacement of Persian by Urdu as the language of administration and the courts in the 1880s also worked against the Mulkis, whose specialized knowledge of Persian had been a valued and necessary skill in the old Hyderabad Mughlai administration. The old Hyderabad officials, both Hindu and Muslim, had a decided advantage so long as Persian remained the state's official language. Urdu, while still a vernacular widely spoken and understood throughout northern India and Hyderabad, was becoming associated with the Muslim community in North India, and its selec-

tion to replace Persian in Hyderabad had implications for administrative recruitment.<sup>40</sup>

By 1890, it was clear that non-Mulkis dominated the Diwani administration. Salar Jung II had begun his Diwanship as an old friend of the young Nizam, but his apparent manipulation by Diwani and Residency officials soon provoked conservative opposition to him. Palace officials and others of the old order who had the ear of the Nizam turned Mahbub Ali Khan against his Diwan. The statistical domination by non-Mulkis of the Diwani positions, particularly the highest and most lucrative ones, became the central political issue. The non-Mulki dominance was true not only in the earliest civil lists but increased as the administration expanded. In 1886, the first Hyderabad Civil List showed the 476 civil officers according to origin and salary:<sup>41</sup>

Place of Origin	Number	%	% of all salary disbursements
Hyderabad	246	52%	42%
All outsiders	230	48%	58%
Hindustani	97	20%	24%
Madras	66	14%	11%
Bombay	36	8%	8%
Europe	24	5%	13%
Other countries	7	1%	1%

The 52 per cent who were Mulkis received only 42 per cent of all salary disbursements, while the 48 per cent who were non-Mulkis received 58 per cent of the salaries. In particular, Europeans were disproportionately highly paid, followed by the Hindustanis.

A separate list of those appointed since October 1884 revealed even greater discrepancies. Of these 421 new appointments, 274, or 65 per cent, were Hyderabadis, receiving only 37 per cent of the total salaries. The 147 foreigners, or 35 per cent of the new appointees, received 63 per cent of the total salaries. Salar Jung II attributed this pattern to the large number of appointments being made to the Judicial, Survey and Education Departments, for which local talent was not available.<sup>42</sup>

Despite explicit instructions from the Nizam, expansion of the Diwani bureaucracy continued to favour non-Mulkis. Political in-



trigues centered on this issue forced the resignation of Salar Jung II, but his successors faced the same issue. The Civil List of 1894 included 680 gazetted officers, an increase of just over 200. The number of non-Mulkis had nearly doubled, from 230 to 447 men, in the eight-year period from 1886, but the number of Hyderabadis had actually decreased, with only 233 recorded as Mulkis.<sup>43</sup>

This 1894 Civil List also noted that some of the Mulkis were 'of only one generation', suggesting that this category was being redefined as non-Mulkis settled in the state and their sons began to enter government service. From 1884 to 1886, a series of government resolutions defined 'Mulkis' and outlined procedures for government employment.<sup>44</sup> A Mulki was defined as a person who had permanently resided in Hyderabad state for fifteen years or who had continuously served under the government for at least twelve years; he and his lineal male descendants to two generations were legally Mulkis. While no non-Mulkis were to be appointed on a high or low post, either permanently or temporarily, without special government permission, a non-Mulki could apply for such permission by detailing his special knowledge and experience not yet available in Hyderabad. The successful applicant received a certificate of domicile, known as a Mulki certificate.<sup>45</sup> These regulations enabled non-Mulkis and their sons to retain their monopoly on administrative positions.

In legal terms, then, the non-Mulki group became a transition category, through which recent immigrants moved themselves and their children as soon as service or bribery secured a Mulki certificate. But regardless of legal certification, most descendants of those who had come as non-Mulkis continued to be regarded as non-Mulkis by those of longer residence in the state. As the legal definitions of Mulki and non-Mulki became more explicit and rigid, the terms became more and more flexible in popular usage, so that an individual's status could be one or the other depending upon the circumstances and the viewpoints of others. Although the Civil Lists continued to classify officials by origin, statistics based upon place of birth no longer reflected social perceptions of group membership. Contemporary accounts speak of 'bona fide' Mulkis and 'first generation' Mulkis, of sons of the soil and sons of non-Mulki officials, and all were legally Mulkis.<sup>46</sup>

Educational and professional differences between the two groups were also perpetuated into the next generation by the slowness of

Mulki acquisition of western education. While some Hyderabad men had been able to enter the new social life, it proved far more difficult for them to secure good positions in the new bureaucracy for which English was becoming essential at higher levels. The Education Department had hardly expanded since its initiation in 1860 and placement under the Revenue Department. Missionaries and non-Mulkis had founded a few English-medium schools, but they were concentrated in the new city of Hyderabad and in Secunderabad. Even Salar Jung I's palace school had moved into the new city before 1880. In the old city, the first two private schools offering English were begun only in 1880 and 1882; there were no English-medium schools in the old city.<sup>47</sup>

In 1883-4, a non-Mulki educator became secretary of the Education Department and persuaded the government to inaugurate a hierarchical school system throughout the state based on vernacular primary schools. He threatened that without an adequate primary and secondary school system, the state could have no institution of English-medium higher education.<sup>48</sup> Once the lower levels were started, the system was topped by the amalgamation of several local English-medium schools (including that started by Salar Jung I) into Nizam College. Nizam College was affiliated to Madras University in 1886-7, becoming part of the British Indian educational system. This small English-medium college enrolled some forty students at the turn of the century, mostly Eurasians and non-Mulki Hindus and Muslims.<sup>49</sup>

That non-Mulkis and Mulkis, and specifically those associated with the Diwani and former Mughlai administrations, valued or utilized western education very differently is clear from an analysis of children enrolled in the state's modern educational system, contained in the Administration Report of 1897. This report classified the 55,797 children then in school according to their fathers' occupations, and the old Mughlai courtiers and employees were clustered at the bottom of the list. Diwani government officials, numerically a much smaller group than the three occupational categories above them, were near the top.<sup>50</sup> With respect to women's education, a controversial social reform issue in the nineteenth century,<sup>51</sup> the government officials and the Mughlai officials were again at opposite ends of the range. Almost 8 per cent of the children in school at that time were girls, and the daughters of government officials constituted 20 per cent of them (879 of 4,414).

The daughters of the *mansabdars*, *jagirdars*, and nobles combined constituted only 2 per cent (83) of that total.<sup>52</sup>

The continued educational differences meant that the Diwani bureaucracy could recruit the better-educated non-Mulki sons of those who already dominated it. Furthermore, explicit government regulations discouraged Mughlai employees from moving into new educational and career patterns, requiring *mansabdars* to forfeit a percentage of the family's *mansab* payments if they entered government schools (1877-8)<sup>53</sup> and cutting a family's hereditary *mansab* according to a member's new position in the Diwani administration (1896).<sup>54</sup>

Another educational measure was the awarding of state scholarships to Mulkis for study in England, and here religious factors combined with Mulki-non-Mulki definitions to complicate public perceptions. An early issue concerned whether or not Hindus were even eligible, due to the orthodox ban on ocean travel. Western-educated Hindus criticized the committee appointed by the government to resolve that question because the Hindus put on it were old city Mulkis.<sup>55</sup> The seventeen state scholars in England between 1897 and 1902 were in fact all Muslims, and critics pointed to the repeated choice of the sons of high-ranking non-Mulki officials and members of the Muslim nobility.<sup>56</sup> The contemporary press at the turn of the century took great interest in such matters; the career of the first 'bona fide' Mulki to receive his B.A. degree in 1885 was closely followed and applauded.<sup>57</sup>

Other modern governmental structures were being instituted in Hyderabad, some of them presumably intended to serve as checks upon the bureaucracy: the judicial system, a Legislative Council, and later an Executive Council. Educated Mulkis might have looked to these alternatives for employment and as countervailing forces to the powerful bureaucracy, but they proved ineffective for several reasons.

In the case of the Legislative Council, instituted by the Nizam and a non-Mulki adviser in 1892,<sup>58</sup> the problem was one of both limited powers and personnel. While outlining the few functions delegated to the Legislative Council, the Nizam stated, 'Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to affect in any way the prerogatives of H.H. the Nizam which he will exercise whenever he may think fit in any manner he likes.'<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the majority of its members were officials and it had no executive functions. It outlined and clarified

duties of several assistant ministers, each responsible to the Diwan for several departments, but ultimately the department secretaries initiated policy and procedures and controlled the timing and manner of submissions to the assistant ministers and the Diwan.<sup>60</sup> The 1898 clarification of Legislative Council functions also gave the power of initial recommendation for appointments and promotions to the secretaries of the departments.<sup>61</sup> The Executive Council initiated in 1919 was similarly ineffective, with eight of its nine members officials.<sup>62</sup> The ultimate dependence of the Legislative and Executive Councils upon the Diwani bureaucracy for membership and for initiation of policies and appointments to administrative service reinforced non-Mulki power in the state.

The same limitations characterized the judicial structures and personnel. Although a modern judicial system was gradually built in Hyderabad city from the 1870s, the Anglo-Indian legal system won public acceptance very slowly. In 1883 and 1884 exams for pleaders were instituted, and in the 1890s a High Court was established.<sup>63</sup> Judicial powers were exercised at lower levels by revenue officials until the separation of the Judicial from the Executive in 1921.<sup>64</sup> Again, most of the higher level judicial officials had been drawn from British India, and the educational qualifications tended to maintain non-Mulki domination.<sup>65</sup>

The nineteenth century ended with increasing public awareness of the pervasiveness of non-Mulki domination of Hyderabad's political institutions and increasing confusion about the role of religion in the conflict.<sup>66</sup> Contemporary comment focused upon highly visible new positions or appointments. When the Nizam named a Mulki Hindu, Maharaja Kishen Pershad, Diwan in 1901, there was great public rejoicing;<sup>67</sup> yet this position had become a relatively weak one. Another example of the additional emphasis on Hindu-Muslim considerations comes from the 1898 contest for the two pleaders' seats on the Legislative Council, where the winners were two non-Mulki Muslims, to the great indignation of the local press which had supported one Mulki Muslim and one Mulki Hindu.<sup>68</sup>

The best example of the way the Hindu-Muslim issue exacerbated Mulki-non-Mulki tensions comes from a local newspaper's comments on the 1894 Civil List. Noting that only 63 of the 680 were Hindus, and of those only 20 were Mulki Hindus, the article went on to argue that non-Mulki Muslims in the



Hyderabad service should not be considered foreigners, for they lent strength to the Nizam's government.<sup>69</sup> Thus religion was combined with the Mulki-non-Mulki conflict in a manner prejudicial to the Hindu majority of the Nizam's population, by reasoning which was to become familiar in Hyderabad.

### *III. Administrative Control, Cultural Nationalism, and Political Mobilization*

After the death of Nizam Mahbub Ali Khan in 1911, Nizam Osman Ali Khan came to the throne, and under him the Mulki-non-Mulki conflict entered a third stage. The educational gap between Mulkis and non-Mulkis began to close, but their conflict was no longer limited to the bureaucracy; it became diffused more broadly throughout Hyderabad politics and society. Delineation of the Mulki and non-Mulki categories in the twentieth century reveals increasing divergence between legal and cultural definitions and the addition of religious, and urban and rural distinctions; but the fundamental cleavage continued with respect to administrative and political power.

The non-Mulkis were best defined as those in power. Most non-Mulki administrators now considered Hyderabad their home, and their dominance in the Diwani administration made the rewards of a career there considerable. After the death of Salar Jung I, some non-Mulkis had received titles, and Diwani officials had greater access to the Nizam and the nobles. The community and caste representation in both the non-Mulki category and the Hyderabad nobility meant that Muslims benefited disproportionately from increased association with non-Mulkis. The two earliest schools offering western education, the Dar ul Ulum and the Madrasa-i-Aliya, and the establishment of close ties with Aligarh, had strengthened this tendency. While Salar Jung I had refused to allow Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to be introduced to the young Nizam because Sir Syed would not put on Hyderabad court dress,<sup>70</sup> by the 1890s the North Indian sherwani had become customary dress for Hyderabad's officials.<sup>71</sup> Salar Jung II himself spoke at Aligarh and personally pledged a large increase of Hyderabad state's grant to the school, and his successors strengthened the relationship.<sup>72</sup>

In this period the non-Mulkis' earlier closeness to the British turned to rivalry. Many non-Mulkis and their families continued

associations with people, institutions, and religious or political movements based outside Hyderabad state, particularly Aligarh politics and other Muslim educational endeavours. Political developments in British India led to changed relationships with British officials in Hyderabad. As the ruling class in Hyderabad, non-Mulki officials needed the Resident's support less, and they thought of the native states as rivalling British India in administrative modernization.<sup>73</sup> The Nizam Club, founded by non-Mulki officials and with few or no Englishmen as members, prospered, while the more inclusive Hyderabad Club foundered. The Masonic Lodges, which had integrated Englishmen, officials, and nobles in the 1880s and 1890s, produced several separate English and Indian lodges, and finally lapsed almost entirely.<sup>74</sup>

Intermarriages were occurring between non-Mulki and Mulki families, but rather than working to erase distinctions between the two categories, they appear to have highlighted their differential access to power. First, they emphasized the higher ranking of the non-Mulkis, as non-Mulki officials took promising young Mulkis as sons-in-law and placed them in administrative positions. This was true for both Hindus and Muslims.<sup>75</sup> Such conspicuous alliances and their political consequences, while insignificant in terms of the numbers of Mulkis so favoured, heightened resentment of non-Mulki power in the state. Second, and again because of the Muslim majority involved in such intermarriages and occupational advancement, it emphasized Muslim dominance as well.<sup>76</sup> These intermarriages confirmed non-Mulki social and political dominance in Hyderabad society in a highly personal way.

In contrast to the narrowing legal and political perceptions of non-Mulkis, the Mulki category was obviously expanding and diversifying. Its unity lay in its weakness, its members' lack of access to sources of administrative and political power. But attempts to unify the Mulkis organizationally failed, primarily because a narrowly-conceived cultural nationalism was chosen as the unifying theme by the urban educated Mulkis.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, the Mulki category legally included: 1) people whose families had been resident in the old city of Hyderabad for generations; 2) people from rural Hyderabad moving into urban administrative and professional positions; 3) people whose forebears had come to Hyderabad as non-Mulkis in the nineteenth century; 4) more recent immigrants who

had been able to secure Mulki certificates. Originally the term had meant the residents of the old city, most of whom had been employed in the Mughlai bureaucracy. These long-term Hindu and Muslim subjects of the Nizam had been slow to react to the changes occurring within Hyderabad, let alone those throughout India; with few ties outside the capital city, these Mulkis wanted to regain their traditional places in the politics and society of Hyderabad. As western education became available throughout the city, with many new caste and community schools begun between 1900 and 1915, young urban Mulkis acquired the skills necessary to compete for Diwani positions.<sup>77</sup> With the establishment of Osmania University in the city in 1918, they had access to higher education in Urdu, the state's official language, which presumably enhanced their opportunities for state service.

This younger generation of urban Mulkis was augmented by an incoming group of district Hyderabadis, also western-educated but bringing the indigenous vernacular cultures much more strongly into the capital city than formerly. These men were legally Mulkis, and in fact they represented the majority of the Nizam's subjects: the Telugu-, Marathi-, and Kannada-speaking Hindus of the Hyderabad districts. Drawn by the expansion of the educational system, the Diwani bureaucracy and professional opportunities, these subjects of the Nizam sought careers in Hyderabad city and other administrative centres. Not all tried for government service; many were educators and lawyers.<sup>78</sup> Those who had gone to neighbouring British Indian presidencies for higher education retained contact with their schoolmates and followed political developments there, somewhat blurring the boundaries between Hyderabad state and British India.<sup>79</sup>

The place of these district-born Mulkis in Hyderabad politics and society was ambiguous. They did not share the urban background, the fondness for Mughlai culture, and the deep loyalty to the Nizam characteristic of the original Mulkis. They knew Urdu and/or English for professional purposes, and they founded vernacular libraries and cultural associations in the city.<sup>80</sup> By their residence in the newer sections of Hyderabad and Secunderabad and in their social and political interests, they shared characteristics with the non-Mulkis. But like the old city Mulkis, they were confronted by non-Mulki domination of the government.

In this third period, the non-Mulki administrators showed little

concern for public participation in politics, and it proved difficult for even the staunchest of Hyderabad's supporters to argue that political reforms of significance were made.<sup>81</sup> Only administrative modernization, not political modernization, was the goal. The officials did not view themselves as part of a political system with a specified and limited role in the process of political modernization of the state. Rather, they were an administrative elite, with training and ideological orientations of their own. Composed almost entirely of non-Mulkis and their descendants, connected by educational experiences and by marriages, they ignored the demands of Mulkis for wider participation. Like the elite cadre of ICS officers in British India, they emphasized the maintenance of law and order and felt responsible only to themselves.<sup>82</sup>

The Hyderabad administration failed to decentralize existing structures and functions or to initiate new and broader political institutions and processes. The Executive Council formed in 1919 reflected the larger administration in that the nominal and less important positions were held by Mulki nobles while non-Mulki officials held the Finance, Revenue, Political and Public Works positions.<sup>83</sup> Also from 1919, there was discussion of legislative devolution, but no actions were taken to expand political participation.<sup>84</sup>

Government regulations limited and repressed political activities, apparently dating from the Khilafat agitation in the state,<sup>85</sup> but intensified by the Arya Samaj Hindu revivalism. From the point of view of the Hyderabad government, these regulations were aimed at non-Mulki or external interference, and many non-Mulkis, both Muslim and Hindu, were deported from Hyderabad for inciting communal disturbances.<sup>86</sup> Of major concern to the Hyderabad government, and to the British Resident as well,<sup>87</sup> was the expansion of Arya Samaj activities. Arya Samaj membership grew in the Hyderabad districts, rising from under 10 in 1921 to 3,700 in 1931, while membership in the city fell from 539 to 400 in the same decade.<sup>88</sup> Newly-begun Arya Samaj schools and gymnasiums became centres of anti-government propaganda and were a major cause of the government's new regulations governing the recognition of private schools in 1924.<sup>89</sup> Yet many privately-run Hindu schools continued to exist and receive government aid, and the long-established Hyderabad City Arya Samaj continued vigorous religious and social reform activities under the leadership of old



city Mulkis.<sup>90</sup> There was increasing co-ordination between Hyderabad Aryas and those outside the state, and writings and pamphlets produced outside about Hyderabad were distributed widely within the state. Their inflammatory nature was cited by the government as reason to censor printed materials entering the state.<sup>91</sup>

From the 1920s, a series of regulations subjected all public meetings to government clearance and permission, and at times public speeches were subjected to prior approval or disapproval by government officials. Lists of prescribed periodicals and books were issued and reissued periodically.<sup>92</sup> When communal incidents did occur, the government responded with committees to investigate and formulate new policies, for example with regard to the observation of Muslim and Hindu religious functions falling upon the same days. Almost invariably, the Hindu members appointed to such committees were old city Mulkis from Urdu-speaking communities,<sup>93</sup> showing the government's preference for a certain type of loyal Hindu subject, and leading to results more acceptable to the government than to some of the Nizam's other Hindu subjects.

The administrators in Hyderabad city functioned in an environment not representative of the state as a whole. Census figures for 1921 illustrate the differences between Hyderabad city and the state in terms of religion and language.<sup>94</sup>

### *1921: Religion and Language of Population*

	Religion			Mother Tongue			
	Hindu	Muslim	Urdu	Telugu	Tamil	Marathi	Kannada
Hyderabad city	52%	43%	50%	39%	3%	3%	—
Hyderabad state	85%	10%	10%	48%	—	26%	12%

These contrasting demographic characteristics help to explain the actions taken by the Hyderabad administration with respect to education, cultural nationalism, and political mobilization in these decades.

The educational system in Hyderabad expanded rapidly in the

second decade of the twentieth century, and the Urdu-medium Osmania University was established in Hyderabad city in 1918. The establishment of Osmania and the increase in Urdu-medium secondary schools to feed it<sup>95</sup> had several far-reaching effects. First, it increased communal criticisms of the educational system by apparently increasing educational advantages for Muslims. Second, it fed the Mulki-non-Mulki conflict directly by equipping more Mulki students for government service. Third, the founding of Osmania led to the formulation of conflicting cultural nationalisms which took organizational form in Hyderabad by the 1940s.

Critics charged that Muslims were benefiting disproportionately from expansion of the state's educational facilities, and particularly from the establishment of Osmania. Statistical patterns substantiated Osmania's effect in increasing the number of Mulkis and of Muslims enrolled in higher educational institutions in Hyderabad.<sup>96</sup>

### *School Enrolment in Hyderabad State*

Year	Primary		Secondary		College	
	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims
1900	25,373	15,324	6,418	5,496	22	12
1905	26,418	16,516	6,002	6,107	24	8
1910	29,359	17,645	6,261	7,985	49	30
1918	20,309	20,747	10,500	12,546	98	207
1925	138,317	67,817	18,008	18,974	391	607
1930	180,833	99,827	21,506	21,624	483	667

The literacy figure for Muslims more than doubled from 1881 to 1931, while that for Hindus increased by only 0.4 per cent.<sup>97</sup> The criteria of community and language were used to assess the state's educational policies and progress, and private schools were subjected to similar scrutiny.<sup>98</sup> Numerical expansion and modernization were accompanied by the disproportionate geographic, religious, and linguistic orientation of the educational system.

For the non-Mulki officials, Osmania was a modernizing educational institution, both a symbol of Hyderabad's traditions and an experiment in modern education. No modern higher educational institution in India taught through the vernacular medium then, and the non-Mulki officials and largely non-Mulki faculty viewed Osmania's establishment as an experiment in the modernization of

a backward population. They hoped that use of the vernacular would improve the quality of higher education for more Hyderabad students and that Osmania might provide a model for the expansion of higher education in British India as well.<sup>99</sup> Importantly, Osmania would be independent of the British Indian educational system, a teaching and examining institution with total control over its curriculum. The British government learned of this plan only after its sanction by the Nizam had been announced by the vernacular press in North India.<sup>100</sup>

Osmania's planners justified their choice of Urdu not only because it was the official language, but because it was the only vernacular 'more or less understood throughout the Dominions, especially in those urban areas from which His Highness's subjects who generally take to secondary education are mainly drawn ...'. English, however, was a compulsory subject because graduates of the new university 'should not be inferior to those of the existing Indian universities as regards their practical acquaintance with a language which has become essential in every department of life'.<sup>101</sup>

The student body envisioned, then, was urban and familiar with Urdu; the utility of an Osmania degree was initially unclear. Since the plan for Osmania had been developed in relative secrecy, not only the British but Mulki Hyderabadis were suspicious of it at first. '... No mulkis have any hand in shaping the constitution of the University, [so] that the work is entirely in the hands of officers who come from British India.'<sup>102</sup> The Nizam's government sought to dispel local objections by officially stating that the examinations for Osmania were to be considered equivalent to similar qualifications of other universities in India for purposes of employment, departmental service, and educational scholarships.<sup>103</sup> Osmania could be viewed, then, as providing opportunities for more Mulki students to enter the government service.

Yet since English was now 'essential in every department of life', an Osmania education still ranked below that afforded by English-medium institutions. Accordingly, most of the non-Mulkis appear to have sent their own sons and daughters to English-medium schools, Nizam College, or others in India or England. While Osmania had a larger student body from its initiation, Nizam College continued to attract the best students in the state. Thus in 1936 and 1937, 'every pupil who passed with a First Class in the Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate exams joined Nizam

College'. The government allegedly favoured Osmania,<sup>104</sup> but apparently saw it as a source of educated citizens rather than officials. That Aligarh should have been the Haileybury of the Hyderabad Civil Service,<sup>105</sup> rather than Osmania or even Nizam College, was ironic confirmation of the continuing dominance of the original non-Mulki administrators.

Inauguration of Osmania contributed most immediately not to the amelioration of the Mulki-non-Mulki conflict, but to its intensification and further elaboration. The first problem came with the Translation Bureau and the preparation of textbooks for the new university. The head of this Bureau was a non-Mulki, as were many of the translators, and they utilized North Indian rather than Hyderabad Urdu. This 'pure' form drew upon classical Persian and Arabic sources, while Mulkis advocated drawing upon Deccani Urdu and the vernaculars indigenous to the Deccan. Most translators and faculty members were non-Mulki, however, and North Indian Urdu became the standard for both texts and lectures.<sup>106</sup>

From this initial disagreement, factions developed within the faculty, and the argument moved beyond language to broader cultural and historical questions. Mulki scholars, led by Dr Zore of the Urdu department, developed the idea of a 'Deccani synthesis' composed of Hindu and Muslim cultural elements and fostered by tolerant Muslim rule in the Deccan. Opposition to this came from the non-Mulki faculty, particularly Dr Abdu'l Haq, also of the Urdu department and former head of the Translation Bureau.<sup>107</sup>

Literary and cultural institutions and political movements were founded in the city which embodied these conflicting views. The Mulki scholars established the Idara-i-Adabiyat-i Urdu, or Aiwan-i Urdu, in about 1930. This local library and research institution had both Hindu and Muslim members, and it collected and published materials supporting the idea of a 'Deccani synthesis'. This idea assigned a major creative role to the Muslim rulers in the Deccan for their patronage of Deccani Urdu and their development of a category of loyal subjects, or Mulkis, which cut across religious and caste lines. Hyderabad state was viewed as a unique and well-integrated society which, like earlier Deccani kingdom, had to defend itself against intolerant and narrow-minded non-Mulkis.<sup>108</sup> There were historical limitations to this theme, but Mulki scholars and politicians found it relevant and useful in the 1930s and 1940s. It furnished the slogan of the Mulki political movement: 'Long live



the Nizam, the Royal Embodiment of Deccani Nationalism'.<sup>109</sup>

Those who opposed the 'Deccani synthesis' theme were originally non-Mulki scholars at Osmania, but Mulki Muslims also became prominent in the political movement which emphasized the special position of Islam and Muslims in Deccani history. There were several local institutions and organizations which contributed to this. The Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-i Urdu, founded in 1903 at Aligarh primarily to translate western literature and science into Urdu, had moved to Hyderabad state with its second honorary secretary, and its fourth secretary was Moulvi Abdul Haq, of the Osmania Translation Bureau's Urdu department.<sup>110</sup> From about 1935, the Anjuman changed its mission from publishing learned books to 'vigorously [promoting] ... the popularization of the Urdu language among the masses of the people'. In 1936, the headquarters moved to Delhi, but the branch of the Anjuman left in Hyderabad, Urdu Hall, was linked to the militant Ittehad ul Muslimin in the 1940s.<sup>111</sup> The scholarly journal, *Islamic Culture*, begun in Hyderabad in 1926, also reflected the development of Muslim patriotism in Hyderabad. Its editorial board was heavily dominated by Osmania faculty, members and high government officials, all Muslims and almost all recent immigrants.<sup>112</sup>

The Ittehad ul Muslimin, a Muslim cultural organization founded in 1927 by a Mulki Muslim, developed into the most powerful political expression of Muslim patriotism. Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung was a *jagirdar* whose traditional Islamic education concluded with a pilgrimage to Mecca and Islamic countries. This well-liked young Hyderabadí developed a theory of Hyderabad as a Muslim state. The slogan of the Ittehad contrasted with that of the Mulki movement: 'Long live the Nizam, the Royal Embodiment of Muslim Sovereignty in the Deccan'. An inspired orator, Bahadur Yar Jung organized branches of the Ittehad in the Hyderabad districts, and after his death in 1944, the movement became more political.<sup>113</sup> Others who assumed its leadership encouraged a militant wing which became the Razakar movement of the 1940s. This Muslim terrorist movement tried to influence the public and the Nizam in the delicate negotiations with the British, the Indian and Pakistani nationalists, and, ultimately, the Indian Union.<sup>114</sup>

Mulki political organizations began in the 1920s with the formation of a local Osmania Graduates' Association<sup>115</sup> and, in London, the Society of Union and Progress. The Society was founded in

1926 by a small group of Hyderabad students studying in England, both Hindus and Muslims; it excluded people belonging to 'communal' organizations. The Society of Union and Progress had no commitment to democratize the state. Its sole aim then was to educate public opinion to the desirability of 'responsible government', meaning the responsibility of the executive to the legislative branch, and it worked for the Legislative Council reforms promised in 1919.<sup>116</sup> The formal inauguration in Hyderabad of the Nizam's Subjects' League, or the Mulki League, occurred in 1935, with printed materials and large public meetings.<sup>117</sup>

This Mulki movement seemed potentially able to win the recognition of the Nizam and the support of Mulki Hyderabadis, with an ideology and membership including all major elements of the population and a long-standing grievance to exploit. Loyalty to the Nizam and to a Deccani culture and language were basic tenets of the Mulki League. It had many Muslim participants, men who had studied at Osmania or in England. The movement focused upon replacing non-Mulkis with Mulkis in a responsible government, avoiding British advice and pressure, and retaining the Nizam and the old aristocracy as allies.

The Mulki League's working papers show the political thought of these young Hyderabadis and the political limitations of the League. Opening quotations point to double enemies, the British and the non-Mulkis: 'heaviest of all yokes, is the yoke of the stranger. . . .'<sup>118</sup> Defining itself as a constitutional movement in the best interests of the sovereign and the state, the Mulki League called for Hyderabad's continued existence as a sovereign state and for a constitutional government under the Asafia dynasty. The League was willing to retain not only the Nizam but the aristocracy, including Samasthan rulers and *jagirdars*.<sup>119</sup>

The Mulki League was less interested in political modernization than in participation in the administration. Mulki discontent was attributed to acute unemployment and the continued dominance of North Indian non-Mulkis:<sup>120</sup>

Thanks to the Osmania University and to the liberal educational policy of the Nizam's government in granting scholarships and loans to candidates desirous of prosecuting higher studies abroad there are thousands of highly educated Hyderabadées who naturally resent bitterly their claims to enter State service being lightly passed over.

The League advocated 'Deccani Nationalism' and believed that

'Hindustani should be encouraged and fostered as the common language of Hyderabad', both for its contribution to Deccani Nationalism and its potential use to Indian federalism. The Asafia rulers earned praise for saving Hyderabad from foreign rule and for having developed a common culture and common language in Hyderabad. The Mulki League deplored communalism as an import from British India, an attempt to divert Hyderabadis from the basic and more important distinction between Mulkis and foreigners.<sup>121</sup>

A Mulki League proposal which found official favour was that economic interest groups should serve as the basis for consitutional representation. This alternative to communal representation was later adopted by the government's Reforms Committee of 1937-8 to justify retention of a disproportionate number of government positions for Muslims. The Mulki League, the Ittehad ul Muslimin and the Hyderabad administration were in essential agreement on this point: since Hindus dominated in all other lucrative occupations in the state, such as trade and money-lending, the liberal professions, the landed zamindars and agriculturists, they could agree upon a continuation of the 'historic' share of official government positions for Muslims.<sup>122</sup>

Only three years later, in 1938, the Hyderabad State Congress was formed, an apparent continuation of the Mulki League. Some of the same leaders were involved,<sup>123</sup> but in fact the leadership and the goals were far broader and differed significantly from those of the earlier group. The new political coalition presented itself as a Mulki organization and called for responsible government under the Asafia dynasty, but it came into existence primarily to co-ordinate the growing regional organizations and to replace the leaders from Hyderabad city, whom the provincial leaders found 'uncertain'.<sup>124</sup> A provisional committee which included some of the city leaders was set up to form the Hyderabad State Congress; it spent time negotiating with the Hyderabad government, while district organizers pushed for action.<sup>125</sup> The district Mulkis controlled the Hyderabad State Congress, and their rapid replacement of the urban leaders reflected the pace of political events in Hyderabad state.

The position of the Hyderabad administration until 1938 had been one of defensive reaction to events. After the 1935 British Indian decentralizing political reforms, it constituted

a Reforms Committee in 1937 to recommend increases in the elective and non-official membership of the Hyderabad Legislative Council.<sup>126</sup> But the Executive Council's concerns were seriously limited and lagged far behind political developments in British India and even within the state. First, the administration still failed to employ an adequate proportion of the indigenous population or to reflect the social order within Hyderabad state. From its inception, the decision-making levels had been largely closed to members of long-standing Mulki families. Under Nizam Osman Ali Khan, successive prime ministers were recruited from outside Hyderabad, professional administrators with British Indian experience and reputations.<sup>127</sup> Second, the administration failed to accommodate local political and social demands and convert them into programmes and action.<sup>128</sup> Since it was unchecked by legislative or judicial review, there were few ways for residents of the state to influence the administration. Third, by the late 1930s the ideology of a Muslim state which motivated many high-ranking officials was not compatible with continued popular support by a majority of the state's inhabitants.

Yet the government was not entirely unresponsive, nor was it clearly pro-Muslim, before the Hyderabad satyagraha of 1938. That it had no consistent policy for dealing with popular local leaders and social and political movements is clear from the progress of this satyagraha. It did appoint a committee at the request of the Hindu Civil Liberties Union to investigate the communal riots which opened the year in 1938.<sup>129</sup> It placed restrictions upon public speeches by particular local leaders—Bahadur Yar Jung of the Ittehad ul Muslimin and Pandit Narinderji of the Arya Samaj.<sup>130</sup> At the same time, it lessened censorship of the press and eased restrictions upon public meetings, so that notification but not prior approval was required for non-political meetings. The first public meeting held under these new rules was a celebration of Tilak's anniversary, ironically justified as lauding a Mulki since Tilak had been part-proprietor of an industrial concern in Hyderabad.<sup>131</sup> Sarojini Naidu, a (first generation) Mulki and a well-known member of the Indian National Congress, presided over a civic affairs conference while a Provincial Congress Committee member was banned from the state.<sup>132</sup> Bahadur Yar Jung was prevented from speaking to a crowd of 15,000 people celebrating the Prophet's birthday, but Pandit Narinderji was allowed to lead a



Dasara procession of 20,000 sponsored by the Arya Samaj through the city, and the Nizam himself gave *darshan* along the way.<sup>133</sup>

In the midst of these apparently *ad hoc* responses to specific events in 1938, the Reforms Committee presented its report to the government, and political consequences followed swiftly. The report contained provisions which perpetuated 'the peculiar political and historical position of the Muslims in Hyderabad'.<sup>134</sup> Only a week later, the provisional committee negotiating to form the Hyderabad State Congress was officially notified by the Nizam that such an organization would be unlawful.<sup>135</sup> While the provisional committee debated possible appeals, district leaders went ahead with plans for a satyagraha in Hyderabad city and for immediate formation of the Congress anyway, knowing it would be banned. Many of these leaders were associated with the Arya Samaj or were in active communication with the Indian National Congress and Gandhi himself.<sup>136</sup>

The State Congress leaders' decision to go ahead with the satyagraha confirmed the major differences between the new Hyderabad State Congress and the Mulki League. Their attitudes towards the Indian National Congress and a future independent India differed. The Mulki League of 1935, like the Ittehad ul Muslimin, wanted a free and sovereign Hyderabad; the State Congress foresaw an inevitable and close union with formerly British India. They differed concerning culture and language, matters on which the Mulki League had strong views and on which the Hyderabad State Congress was silent. The strength of the State Congress was in its regional organization, and most of the leaders communicated better in their regional languages and English than in Urdu. Finally, the two organizations differed in their willingness to tolerate 'communalism' in allies or members. The State Congress took direct action in the 1938 satyagraha in conjunction with Hindu communal organizations and spoke out against the 'irresponsible autocratic, and medieval' government of Hyderabad,<sup>137</sup> showing its disinterest in local Muslim and Mulki League support. The State Congress was not, then, a greatly expanded and more powerful Mulki League which offered the Nizam an attractive ideological and organizational basis for his continued rule in the Deccan.

The satyagraha began in October 1938, initiated by the Hyderabad State Congress with participation from the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Civil Liberties Union.<sup>138</sup> In the last week of that

month, the formation of the Hyderabad State Congress was announced at a large public gathering by the president and four satyagrahis; they were immediately arrested. Groups of five, always including a popular leader and followers from all three linguistic regions of the state, repeated this announcement three times a week.<sup>139</sup> After about two months, partly in response to Gandhi's advice, the Congress suspended sponsorship because of the increasingly communal character of the satyagraha. Leadership passed to the Arya Samaj, whose out-of-state members were providing the largest number of volunteer satyagrahis.<sup>140</sup> The government of Hyderabad ultimately arrested some nine thousand people, more than 80 per cent of them non-Mulkis.<sup>141</sup>

Local support for the satyagraha came from Hindu shopkeepers, who observed hartal to protest the arrests,<sup>142</sup> and from college students who sang the forbidden *Vande Mataram* in their hostels, both at Osmania and in the district colleges.<sup>143</sup> As the arrests continued and funds and volunteers from the Arya Samaj dwindled, both sides looked for a settlement. The satyagraha was finally declared officially withdrawn by the Arya Samaj in July 1939.<sup>144</sup> It had succeeded in decisively altering political relationships within Hyderabad state.

From this point on, administrative control of politics in Hyderabad state was never regained. Pointing to the participation of outsiders in the 1938 satyagraha, government officials viewed predominantly Hindu political organizations in the state as the work of outside politicians. The ban on the Hyderabad State Congress was not lifted; the Reforms of 1938 were not implemented, postponed allegedly because of World War II.<sup>145</sup> The 1938 satyagraha both demonstrated and solidified existing political divisions; it dealt a death blow to an indigenous all-inclusive Mulki movement. It also demonstrated and consolidated the vastly different political goals of the central administrators and the district political leaders.

At this point, too, the Nizam and leading non-Mulki administrators firmly committed themselves to the political ideology of the Ittehad ul Muslimin, which stressed the special role of Islam and the Muslim community. Unlike his immediate predecessors, Nizam Osman Ali Khan had come to believe in administrative modernization as a strategy to retain political independence. He was the first Nizam fully to accept the argument, advanced since the 1840s, that the nobles, *jagirdars*, and others with hereditary lands and incomes

were financial burdens on the state rather than proof of the religious tolerance of his court.<sup>146</sup> Nizam Osman Ali Khan was by all accounts a more orthodox Muslim in both religious and political spheres than most of his predecessors, and an efficient modernizing bureaucracy based upon an ideology of Muslim sovereignty in the Deccan which maintained law and order gained his strong support.

The Nizam and the administrative officials found it preferable to listen to the Ittehad ul Muslimin, the Muslim League, and, occasionally, to the old Mulki loyalists. The Ittehad ul Muslimin advocated Muslim sovereignty vested in the total Muslim community, and it fell under the control of Muslim communalists. Some of these men held high government positions and have been termed 'ruthless fanatics', responsible for the Hyderabad government's mismanaged negotiations with the Government of India in 1947-8.<sup>147</sup> That the Nizam and other Muslim officials in Hyderabad should perceive Muslims from outside the state as more legitimate participants in government than loyal Hindus and other members of the indigenous population was one of the ironies of these final years. Muslim refugees from the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan were welcomed in Hyderabad; Jinnah and others from the Muslim League advised the Nizam; and the Prime Minister who presided over Hyderabad's downfall was on special loan from the government of Pakistan.<sup>148</sup>

Many non-Muslims continued to support the Nizam's government, despite its increasingly pro-Muslim ideology and policies. Some of the leading Hindu nobles defended their concept of a Deccani nation to the end, rebuffing attacks on the Nizam's rule as the mistaken interpretations of outsiders<sup>149</sup> and welcoming the Nizam's abortive proclamation of independence in 1948.<sup>150</sup> Others may have had little choice, given the urban demography, employment patterns, and Razakar terrorism in the city. But many genuinely believed that a Deccani cultural synthesis had been achieved in Hyderabad; the Nizam and his administration accepted their loyalty, but did not reward them by accepting their political advice or participation.<sup>151</sup>

We have seen that the continued use of the terms Mulki and non-Mulki to designate conflicting groups in Hyderabad has served to over-simplify historical realities. The groups so designated have changed radically over time, in both legal and popular definitions: the most consistent meaning centred on possession of political

power. Yet the creation of Osmania University gave fresh life to the old Mughlai Mulki culture and spurred cultural elaborations of the Mulki-non-Mulki conflict that emphasized its latent communal aspects. These new ideologies, of Deccani synthesis and Muslim rule in the Deccan, helped limit political debate in the capital city to the Urdu-speaking educated men, while district politicians developed ideological and organizational ties with the Indian nationalist movement outside Hyderabad state. In short, it is the Mulki-non-Mulki conflict which best explains the narrowed political vision of the administration precisely when both structural and cultural considerations called for a broadening of political vision in Hyderabad state.

### NOTES

**Note:** I am especially indebted to Professors Carolyn Elliott and John G. Leonard for informed criticisms of this article in its final stages. Helpful criticisms of earlier drafts came from Professors Burton Stein, Haroon Khan Sherwani, Mahender Raj Saxena and Sri Roy Mahboob Narayan, the latter three of Hyderabad city.

1. Carolyn M. Elliott, 'Decline of a Patrimonial Regime: The Telegana Rebellion in India, 1946-51', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXIV, 1, November 1974, 27-47; [Ali Yavar Jung], *Hyderabad in Retrospect*, Bombay, 1949.
2. In an early paper, 'Mulki-non-Mulki Conflict in Twentieth Century Politics in Hyderabad State', I emphasized that possibility. Association of Asian Studies meetings, Boston, 1969.
3. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, 'Hyderabad: Muslim Tragedy', *The Middle East Journal*, IV, 1, January 1950, p. 50.
4. See similar cases in Ralph Braibanti, ed., *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*, Durham, 1966, particularly David C. Potter, 'Bureaucratic Change in India', pp. 141-208, and Robert Tilman, 'Bureaucratic Development in Malaya', pp. 594-603.
5. See Manik Rao Vithal Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, Hyderabad, 7 vols., 1909-32; Nawab Jivan Yar Jung's English translation of his father's Urdu autobiography, Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, London, 1932; and my dissertation, 'The Kayasths of Hyderabad City: their Internal History, and their Role in Politics and Society from 1850 to 1900', University of Wisconsin, 1969, chapters 7-10.
6. A good detailed coverage of Salar Jung's Diwanship is V.K. Bawa, 'Hyderabad in Transition under Salar Jung I, 1853-83: An Indian State Under British Influence', Tulane University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1967.
7. For recruitment patterns, Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 78-80, 111, 116-19, 132-3, 153-6, 158, 181-2, 184, and 200-2. The author was one of the few who did not know English, and many of his references are to his own relatives and other Delhi Muslims. For the Aligarh connection, see also J. F. Gorst,



- 'The Kingdom of the Nizam', *The Fortnightly Review*, XXXV, new series, January-June 1884, p. 524.
8. H. Fraser, *Memoir and Correspondence of General J. S. Fraser of the Madras Army*, London, 1885, appendix, xxvi.
  9. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 98, 109, and 183-4.
  10. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
  11. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, VII, pp. 307-8, and I, pp. 160-1 and 190-3. The organizer of the Regular Forces was the Saksena Kayasth Raja Girdhari Pershad: 'Kunuz-i Tavarikh', pp. 64-5, in his *Kulliyat-i Baqi*, Hyderabad, 1887-8; Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, II, pp. 727-8; and M. Soobaraya Moodellear, *Hyderabad Almanac and Directory, 1874*, Madras, 1875, p. 190.
  12. This was Kundaswamy Mudaliar, first with the Secunderabad banking firm of Koti Ramaswamy and then with Palmer and Company. He became Salar Jung's *vakil* in 1857 and served until his death in 1876. Theodore W. La Touche in 'Of Cabbages and Kings', *The Deccan Chronicle*, 16 May 1965. For the North Indian view, see Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 80-1.
  13. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 221.
  14. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
  15. '[His opponents] were the nobles, who were pillars of the State, and equal to him in prestige and rank. He agreed that these were the men in whose hands lay the destiny of the nation, but, sunk in crass ignorance, and utterly oblivious of the duties and responsibilities of life, they led such selfish and pleasure-seeking lives that they were not a good example to the people.' *Ibid.*, p. 271.
  16. *Ibid.*, pp. 97 and 100.
  17. Major James Kirkpatrick, Resident in 1798, married the daughter of a Muslim noble and built a zenana at the Residency. Typed copy of an article by Edward Strachey, 'The Romantic Marriage of Major James Achilles Kirkpatrick', said to be from an 1893 issue of *Blackwoods Magazine*, exists in the Salar Jung Library. See also [Syed Mohiuddin, ed.], *The Chronology of Modern Hyderabad, 1720-1890*, Hyderabad, 1954, pp. 104, 140, 143-4, 151-2, 166.
  18. Fraser, *Memoir and Correspondence*, pp. 41-2, and 162-3.
  19. (a) Files of the Chief Secretariat, instalment 22, list 6, serial number 1, file C2/d1, memo from Salar Jung to J. G. Cordery, 5 March 1869, Andhra Pradesh State Archives.
  - (b) *Hindu*, 23 July 1895, refers to the brief revival of Salar Jung's original order in the 1890s for political reasons. This and other articles have been collected in a Clippings Collection (hereafter referred to as CC) in the A. P. State Archives, which covers the period from 1890 to about 1903.
  20. British officials apparently first viewed the Langar Muharram procession in 1866, when Salar Jung took a small invited group into the city as his personal guests. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, II, p. 789.
  21. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 91-2; Fraser, *Memoir and Correspondence*, p. 317.
  22. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 104. By pointedly consulting the Nizam's grandmother and other ladies of the zenana, 'in certain important political

- matters ... [Salar Jung] was able to protect himself from the unreasonable interference of the Resident, by the use of her ladyship's name.' Ibid., p. 98. See also, *H.R.H. The Prince of Wales' Visit to India*, London, n.d., pp. 19 and 26.
23. See Bawa, 'Hyderabad in Transition'; Richard Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim, and Nepal*, London, 1887, 2 vols., I; and Thomas Henry Thornton, *General Sir Richard Meade and the Feudatory States of Central and Southern India*, London, 1898. Recurring issues were the implementation of judicial reforms, reduction of Arab troops, use of the Hyderabad Contingent, construction of the railroad through Hyderabad, and substitution of salaried talukdars for revenue contractors.
  24. *Report on the Administration of His Highness the Nizam's Dominions, for the five years 1308 to 1312 Fasli (1898-1903)*, Hyderabad, 1907, p. 10.
  25. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 92.
  26. Dr Manzoor 'Alam, 'The Growth of Hyderabad City: A Historical Perspective', in H. K. Sherwani, ed., *Studies in Indian Culture*, Hyderabad, 1966, for a brief overview; for detailed information see the *Hyderabad Municipal Survey, 1911*, by Leonard Munn, in the Director of Town Planning Office, Saifabad.
  27. Files of the Chief Secretariat, instalment 22, list 6, serial number 2, file C2/d1, vol. II, labelled confidential, A. P. State Archives.
  28. Moulvi Cheragh Ali, *Hyderabad under Sir Salar Jung*, Bombay, Education Society's Press, 4 vols., 1884-6, I, pp. 94-5; quote, p. 90.
  29. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 95.
  30. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, I, p. 342. Rao discusses the development of schools and the government system and regulations, pp. 340-62.
  31. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 271.
  32. Syed Hossain Belgrami Motaman Jung, *History of the Operations of His Highness the Nizam's Educational Department for the last 30 years together with a detailed Report and Returns for 1883-84-85*, Hyderabad, 1886, p. 17.
  33. For the abortive revenue survey school for nobles, tried in 1870, see M. Fathufla Khan, *A History of Administrative Reforms in Hyderabad State*, Secunderabad, 1935, p. 65. He encouraged Rajas Inderjit, Shiv Raj, and Murli Manohar of the Malwala Kayasth hereditary record-keeping family to study English and enter the Diwani administration. Shiv Narayan Saksenah, *Kayasth Sajjan Caritra*, Jaipur, 3 vols., 1912-13, p. 1; A. C. Campbell, *Glimpses of the Nizam's Dominions*, London, 1898, p. 74; Ghulam Samdahi Khan, *Tuzuk-i Mahbuiyah*, Hyderabad, 2 vols., 1902, II, nobles section, pp. 23, 39.
  34. The judicial and revenue systems operated differently in these areas, though Diwani officials were sometimes lent to them.
  35. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 189 to the end; Gorst, 'The Kingdom of the Nizam', pp. 522-30; a criticism of Gorst by Grattan Geary, *Hyderabad Politics*, Bombay, 1884; and Wilfred Scawen Blunt, *India Under Ripon*, London, 1909, p. 64 *et passim*. A succinct account of the Government of India position appears in S. Gopal, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon 1880-84*, Oxford, 1953, pp. 211-12.

36. CC, A. P. State Archives. For the relaxation of regulations which followed Salar Jung's death and revisions of the visiting lists and rules, Files of the Chief Secretariat, instalment 22, list 6, serial number 2, file C2/d1; and similar materials for 1914 in instalment 20, list 1, serial number 64, file C2/d27.
37. See my article, 'Cultural Change and Bureaucratic Modernization in Nineteenth Century Hyderabad: Mulkis, non-Mulkis, and the English', in P. M. Joshi, ed., *Studies in the Foreign Relations of India*, Hyderabad, 1975.
38. These changes are discussed at length in my dissertation and my forthcoming book, *The Kayasths of Hyderabad: Social History of an Indian Caste*. They can be traced in Salar Jung II, *Confidential Memorandum of Salar Jung II, reprint, to the Resident, of September 18, 1886*, in the Salar Jung Library; sections of the *Report on the Administration . . . for . . . 1308 to 1312 Fasli*; and in Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, various volumes by subject.
39. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 220-1.
40. Roy Mahboob Narayan and Carolyn Elliott both drew my attention to the significance of the language change here.
41. The Nizam demanded lists indicating place of origin of employees. Salar Jung II, *Confidential Memorandum*, pp. 60-1. Earlier lists (not retained in the file) were sent 5 August 1885, and 27 November 1885. See also, Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, VI, p. 41, which gives details concerning issuance of Civil Lists.
42. Salar Jung II, *Confidential Memorandum*, p. 64, from October 1884, when he was appointed, to January 1886. In those two years, 1,505 men had been appointed or promoted. Salar Jung II used only those newly appointed, as 849 promotions and 235 reappointments went to men already in service.
43. *The Deccan Budget*, 1 June 1894, in the CC, A. P. State Archives. See Sarojini Regani, 'The Appointment of Diwans in Hyderabad State (1803-87)', *Andhra Historical Research Society*, vol. 25 (1958-60), p. 18 for Salar Jung's dismissal.
44. See Nawab Aziz Jung, *Khazina-i Finance va Hisab*, Hyderabad, 1319 F. (1909-10), pp. 35-7. The earliest preferential order was in 1869; but orders specifying definitions and conditions of employment began in the mid-1880s and originated with the Finance Secretary.
45. This summary is from the English version, first printed in 1919, fifth printing in 1938: *Regulations relating to Salary, Leave, Pension, and Travelling Allowances*, Hyderabad, 1938, pp. 10-12. At times the Nizam was sole authorizing agent, but in 1935, Finance Department orders delegated the issuing of a Mulki certificate to the tehsildar of a candidate's native taluk or place of appointment in cases of IVth class clerks receiving thirty rupees a month or less. New regulations were 'under preparation' from about 1929. *Majmua-i Ahkam* [finance circulars], Hyderabad, 1939.
46. Such references abound in the contemporary press, e.g. *Times of India*, 21 February 1898, in the CC, A. P. State Archives, which contrasts aliens and children of the soil as recipients of scholarships to England.
47. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, I, pp. 340-64 is the best summary of traditional and western schools. See also Lateefunnisa Begum, 'Private Enterprise in Education and the contribution of some famous Private High Schools to the Advancement of Education in the cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad', unpublished M.Ed. thesis, Osmania University, 1956.

48. See Belgrami, *History of...the Nizam's Educational Department*, pp. 1-16; *Report on Public Instruction in H. H. the Nizam's Dominions*, 1306 F. (1896-97), Hyderabad, 1899.
49. 'The Nizam College and Madras-i Aliya', in *The Deccan Mail*, 18 November 1896, in the CC, A. P. State Archives. A very small Arts College at Aurangabad, also affiliated to Madras University, and the Oriental Darul Uloom College, affiliated to Punjab University, completed the governmental institutions at that level in the 1890s. *Report on the Administration of His Highness the Nizam's Dominions, for the four years 1304 to 1307 Fasli (8th October 1894 to 7th October 1898)*, Madras, 1899, pp. 345-6.
50. *Report on the Administration... 1304 to 1307 Fasli*, p. 231. I have converted the numbers into percentages, and the total population of eligible school children for each occupational group was not taken into account.

Children in School: Breakdown by Fathers' Occupations

Cultivators	19%	Lower Servants	5%
Traders	16%	Private Servants	4%
Artisans	13%	Learned Professions	2.4%
Government Officials	13%	Mansabdars	1.2%
Day Labourers	10%	Jagirdars	.8%
Others	9%	Nobles	.2%
Zamindars	6%		

51. See my article, 'Women: Index of Social Change in Modern India', in *Feminist Studies*, III, 2, winter 1976; and the forthcoming book by John G. and Karen Leonard, *Education and Progress: Social Reform Movements in Nineteenth Century South India*.
52. Since the sex of the school children was given, the proportion of daughters to all children in school by parental occupation could be ascertained.
53. Two per cent of the monthly income had to be forfeited if a *mansabdar* joined a government school, according to an order of 1876-7. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiya*, I, p. 341.
54. *The Deccan Mail*, 23 September 1896, in CC, A. P. State Archives.
55. [P.V. Naidoo], *Hyderabad in 1890 and 1891*, Bangalore, 1892, pp. 5-9, where the Hyderabad correspondent to the *Hindu* reprints his objections to 'orthodox and ill-informed' representatives who do not have the confidence of the 'intelligent and educated Hindus'.
56. *Report on the Administration... 1308 to 1312 Fasli*, pp. 357-8; and *Hindu*, 15 February 1895, when a Hindu was proposed but evidently was not sent. CC, A.P. State Archives. In some instances the 'alien' winners were still in primary school or had failed essential examinations. CC, *Times of India*, 21 February 1898. See also CC, *The Deccan Mail*, 13 December 1896, naming deserving Hindu youths who failed to gain state support.
57. CC, *The Deccan Mail*, 2 September 1896. This was Rai Balmukund, whose B.A. was from Madras University. An old city Khatri, he became a High Court judge in 1908.
58. H.K. Sherwani, 'The Evolution of the Legislature in Hyderabad,' *Indian*



- Journal of Political Science*, I, April 1940, pp. 424-38. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 326-7.
59. *Jareeda Extraordinary*, or *Hyderabad Gazette*, XXIX, 51, 16 September 1898, Instalment 7, list 1, serial number 217 of 1896, Public Service, Europeans, Miscellaneous files of the Chief Secretariat, A.P. State Archives.
  60. *Report on the Administration . . . 1308 to 1312 Fasli*, p. 10; see note 24.
  61. *Jareeda Extraordinary*, XXIX, 51, 16 September 1898, see note 59.
  62. *Decennial Report on the Administration of H.E.H. The Nizam's Dominions 1322 to 1331 Fasli (6th October 1912 to 5th October 1922 A.D.)*, Hyderabad, 1930, p. 44.
  63. *Report on the Administration . . . 1308 to 1312 Fasli*, pp. 87-100. See Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, I, p. 261 for history of the judicial administration; and M.A. Muttalib, 'The Administration of Justice under the Nizams, 1724-1947', Ph.D. thesis, Osmania University.
  64. This change resulted in an actual decrease of judicial officers and courts, as talukdars and tehsildars were subtracted while some new district judges and munsiffs were appointed. The separation did not occur in the Sarf-i Khas areas. *Decennial Report . . . (1912-1922)*, pp. 119-21.
  65. Biographical materials on members of the High Court confirm this in K. Krishnaswamy Mudiraj, *Pictorial Hyderabad*, Hyderabad, 2 vols., 1929 and 1934, II.
  66. In the CC, A.P. State Archives.
  67. *Hindu*, 28 August 1901; *The Times of India*, 7 December 1901, CC, A.P. State Archives.
  68. *Hindu*, 3 March 1898; *Hindu*, 18 March 1898, CC, A.P. State Archives..
  69. *The Deccan Budget*, 1 June 1894, CC, A.P. State Archives.
  70. This happened in 1877, when the young Nizam and his Diwan went to the Delhi durbar. Another representative of Aligarh was introduced to the Nizam. Server-el-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 182.
  71. Nar Singh Raj, *Dard-i Baqi o Durd-i Saqi*, Hyderabad, 1933, p. 35, where the Resident points to the old-fashioned court dress of a traditional courtier, Bansi Raja.
  72. *Speeches of His Excellency Nawab Salar Jung (II)*, Secunderabad, 1907, p. 2, where in October 1884 he increased the annual grant by Rs 3,000. The Salar Jung Estate left Rs 116 a month to Aligarh. Lulta Purshad, Nazim (manager), *Réport of the Administration of the Estates of the late Nawab Sir Salar Jung Bahadur for Fasli 1306 (1896-97)*, Hyderabad, 1898, p. 5. When Nawab Vikar ul Umra visited Aligarh, it was mentioned that the Nizam had given the largest permanent endowment to the College. *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 6 September 1895.
  73. See Mudiraj, *Pictorial Hyderabad*, II, p. 28, where Finance Minister Sir Akbar Hydari's views of the states and British India illustrate this.
  74. For the Hyderabad Club and the Nizam Club, see Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, II, pp. 675 and 685; *The Advocate of India*, 22 May and 27 May 1899, and *Madras Mail*, 10 August 1899, CC, A.P. State Archives; *Hyderabad Chronicle*, 27 and 30 July 1898, Asafiyah State Library. *The General Rules of the Hyderabad Club*, printed in 1884, are in the Asafiyah Library. For the Masons, see J.D.B. Gribble, *History of Freemasonry in Hyderabad (Deccan)*,

- Madras, 1910, which I have seen only in the Salar Jung Library. For their integrative function, see *The Pioneer*, n.d. (in sequence of pasting into the CC, about 1 November 1898), CC, A.P. State Archives.
75. I am indebted for this observation to Professor H.K. Sherwani and Roy Mahboob Narayan. Both remarked upon prominent Muslims; from my research on Kayasth families, it is true for Hindus too (descendants of Rae Mannu Lal Asthana, for example).
  76. Two English sources for this impression are Zeenuth Futehally, *Zohra*, Bombay, 1951, a novel dealing with marriages and occupational modernization, and Mohammad Abdur Rahman Khan, *My Life and Experiences*, Hyderabad, 1951.
  77. See Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, I, pp. 340–64; Lateefunnisa Begum, 'Private Enterprise in Education', successive government reports on public instruction in the twentieth century, and Syed Ali Akbar, ed., *Education under Asaf Jah VII: a Retrospect*, Hyderabad, 1952.
  78. See Mudiraj, *Pictorial Hyderabad*, II, for biographies published in 1934. This is also clear from later publications dealing with politicians active from this period, such as Swami Ramananda Tirtha, *Memoirs of the Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, Bombay, 1971 and *Our MLA's* (members of the Legislative Assembly), Hyderabad, 1952.
  79. Elliott, 'Decline of a Patrimonial Regime,' p. 34; see note 78.
  80. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, lists voluntary associations and societies of various kinds, II, pp. 673 ff, IV, pp. 83 ff, and V, p. 275.
  81. See, for example, Sherwani, 'The Evolution of the Legislature', published in 1940.
  82. David Potter, 'Bureaucratic Change in India', pp. 141–208 in Braibanti, ed., *Asian Bureaucratic Systems*, emphasizes these two characteristics of the I.A.S.
  83. Mudiraj, *Pictorial Hyderabad*, II, picture facing p. 21 and biographies of those pictured.
  84. Elliott, 'Decline of a Patrimonial Regime', pp. 28–32; Sherwani, 'Evolution of the Legislature'.
  85. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, V, pp. 254, 272; D. Raghavendra Rao, *Misrule of the Nizam*, n.p., 1926.
  86. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, V, p. 272, provides a list.
  87. Before the 1920s, Residency reports to Hyderabad's officials stressed the swadeshi movement coming into the state from Maharashtra through the *ajirs* of the Paigah noble Viqar ul Umra. Instalment 22, list 5, serial number 70, file H11/1 17, confidential reports from 1909; instalment 22, list 5, serial number 102, file H11/1 17, confidential reports from 1911, to the Political and Private Secretary Faridoonji from the Resident, A.P. State Archives. Later, the Fortnightly Reports focused on the Arya Samaj: for example, those for 1937 in the India Office Library.
  88. *Report of the Reforms Committee 1938*, Hyderabad, 1939, Appendix No. 1, p. 4, summarizes census reports from 1911, 1921, and 1931.
  89. Rao, *Misrule*, p. 94, citing the *Indian Daily Mail*, 20 April 1926; *Hyderabad men Arya Samaj ki Tehrik*, Hyderabad, n.d. [1939], pp. 82–6, where the rules for establishment of private schools in Hyderabad are reprinted.

90. See the government's *Reports on Public Instruction* for these decades. In 1921, a sacred thread ceremony was performed publicly by the Arya Samaj Secretary (city branch) for his daughter, and many prominent nobles and officials were invited. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, IV, p. 302. This Pandit Gaya Pershad left an Urdu manuscript, *Halat-i Gaya Pershad*; it and Captain Surya Pratap, *The Tragedy of Arya Samaj*, Hyderabad, 1960, convey an idea of factions within the city branch. Pandit Narinderji, active in the 1930s and winner of the struggle for control, is writing his own history of this branch.
91. The Hindu Mission Press, New Delhi, published the report of a committee sent down in 1934: Ganpath Rai, *Report on the position of the Hindu Communities in the Nizam's Dominions*, New Delhi, n.d. In rebuttal, Mir Zahid Ali Kamil published *The Communal Problem in Hyderabad*, n.d. [1935]. Then the International Aryan League published *Riyasat-i Hyderabad men Arya Samaj ka muqqadama*, Delhi, n.d. [1938], and the Government of Hyderabad published *Hyderabad men Arya Samaj ki Tehrik*, Hyderabad, n.d. [1939]. The International Aryan League responded with *Nizam Defense Examined and Exposed*, Delhi, n.d.
92. For policy on speeches, see *A Peep into Hyderabad*, Lahore, [1939], p. 26; for 1926, see Rao, *Misrule*, pp. 99–100; and for changes in 1938 in the well-known Gashti No. 53 of 1930, which stated that all public meetings needed prior government permission, see *The Deccan Chronicle*, 10 July 1938 *et passim*. For proscribed writings, see Rao, *Bustani-i Asafiyah*, IV, pp. 226–8 for a 1920 list; Rao, *Misrule*, pp. 26, 111–12 for lists covering 1903 and 1923.
93. For 1924–25, see Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, V, p. 153, and VI, pp. 251–3; Rao, *Misrule*, pp. 56–7.
94. *Decennial Report... (1912–1922)*, pp. 60 and 64 for the urban areas and state. For the city, *Census of India*, 1921, XXI, *Hyderabad State*, Part 1, pp. 4 and 192.
95. Harlan N. Henson, 'Elites, Language Policy and Political Integration in Hyderabad', Ph.D. Ed., University of Illinois, 1974, discusses the inauguration of Osmania.
96. S. Rama Char, 'Education in Hyderabad', *Modern Review*, 66, August 1939, pp. 177–81. I have combined three of his tables.
97. *Ibid.*, pp. 179–80. The increased proportion of Muslim literates can be partly explained by the urban concentration of the Muslim population in the state, the expansion of both private and government educational institutions in urban areas, and the higher literacy of non-Mulki immigrants.
98. See Patrick Lacey, 'The Medium of Instruction in Indian Universities', *Asian Review*, new series, XXXIV, 1938, pp. 534–42; *A Peep into Hyderabad*; B. De, 'The Educational Systems Adopted and the Results Achieved in the More Important Native States in India', *Modern Review*, IX, 1911, pp. 61–71; H.K. Sherwani, 'The Osmania University First Phase: The Urdu Medium (1917–1948)', in Sherwani, *Studies in Indian Culture*, pp. 237–47. The issue of the private schools was taken up by Rao, *Misrule*, Char, 'Education in Hyderabad', and *A Peep into Hyderabad*, as well as in the Arya Samaj attacks.
99. See Sherwani, 'The Osmania University', pp. 241–2, and Lacey, 'The Medium of Instruction'.
100. Henson, 'Elites', pp. 61–2.

101. Memorandum by Sir Akbar Hydari, Home Secretary, to the Nizam, 1917, instalment 36, list 5, serial number 11, A.P. State Archives.
102. Files of the Chief Secretariat, instalment 36, list 5, serial number 9, file 01/al, correspondence between governmental departments.
103. Rao, *Bustan-i Asafiyah*, IV, p. 81, citing the notification of 4 April 1920, in the *Gazette*, V, 40, 19 April 1920.
104. Hyderabad Residency records in the India Office Library, R/1/20/163, enclosed a passage from Principal Turner's 'last' report on Nizam College, which argued that the government's limitation of the Nizam College student body to 300 forced Mulki students to go out to Aligarh, Madras, Benares, Poona, and elsewhere to secure an English-medium education.
105. See Bernard S. Cohn, 'Recruitment and Training of British Civil Servants in India, 1600-1860', in Braibanti, ed., *Asian Bureaucratic Systems*, pp. 87-140, for the analysis of Haileybury with respect to the I.C.S.
106. Descriptions of the early endeavours and faculty members are in *Decennial Report (1912-1922)*, pp. 197-200, and Sherwani 'The Osmania University', pp. 243-6. See also the *Classified List of Officers of Civil Departments of H.E.H. The Nizam's Government for 1931-32*, Hyderabad, 1932, pp. 106-21. Most of the initial 13 faculty were non-Mulkis, and in 1932 only 17 of the 71 faculty had Hyderabad listed as birthplace. Also in 1932, only 11 of the 71 were Hindus.
107. Interviews with Dr Mohammed Khalidi, of the Department of History at Osmania, and Roy Mahboob Narayan, a local scholar of Persian and Urdu, in 1966; subsequent written comments from Professor H.K. Sherwani and Professor Mahender Raj Suxena, and Roy Mahboob Narayan in 1971.
108. The Aiwan-i Urdu publishes *Sab Ras* magazine, titled after the first Deccani Urdu prose piece, and sponsors an annual commemoration of the Qutb Shahi ruler Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, who patronized this language. See my article, 'The Deccani Synthesis in Old Hyderabad: an Historiographic Essay', in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, October 1973, pp. 205-18.
109. The slogan closes the pamphlet, *Whither Hyderabad*, by Syed Abid Hasan, Madras, 1935, then secretary of the Mulki League. See also K.M. Munshi, *The End of an Era*, Bombay, 1957, p. 20.
110. See note 106 and Fazlur Rahman, 'Anjuman i Tarakki i Urdu (India and Pakistan)', in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, I, pp. 505-6.
111. An article in *Islamic Culture*, XIII, 2, April 1939, p. 234, included two pages about this Urdu-promoting organization, while including only seven lines about the (Mulki) Aiwan-i Urdu. See references in [Jung], *Hyderabad in Retrospect*; and Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, Lahore, 1961, p. 380.
112. The Cultural Activities section, begun about 1939, shows clear evidence of this influence, as the Conquest of Mecca Day and similar events were celebrated in Hyderabad, Arabic broadcasts on the Hyderabad Radio began, and so forth. Since 1948, some Hindus have served on the Board.
113. An obituary appeared in *Islamic Culture*, XVIII, 3, July 1944, pp. 234-5; 'there are many Urdu biographies of him. See also *Tarikh-i Majlis Ittehad ul Muslimin*, 1928-40, Hyderabad, 1941.



114. [Jung], *Hyderabad in Retrospect*; Sadath Ali Khan, *Brief Thanksgiving*; and Sir A.C. Lothian, *Kingdoms of Yesterday*, London, 1951, have good accounts.
115. The association published a quarterly magazine, and later a Mulki Industries' magazine in Secunderabad in the 1930s; they helped sponsor a Mulki Industries' Exhibition in 1938. *Deccan Chronicle*, 2 October 1938.
116. [Jung], *Hyderabad in Retrospect*, pp. 1-2.
117. Two of the five signers of the League's initial circular had helped form the Society for Union and Progress. Some efforts had been made earlier in Hyderabad to organize the Society or a similar association. C. Sri Kishen, *Forty-five Years a Rebel*, Hyderabad, n.d. [1953], pp. 110-12; Abdus Salam, *Hyderabad Struggle*, Bombay, 1941, pp. 26-7.
118. Hasan, *Whither Hyderabad*, introductory page. The quotation is from Macaulay.
119. Ibid., five introductory pages.
120. Census statistics were used to document the North Indian dominance. Ibid., pp. 37-43. The Osmania quote is on p. 160.
121. Ibid., pp. 71-2. The question of the script in which Hindustani was to be written was 'a mere matter of detail' to be settled later, although the 'Abul Kalam Azad type of Urdu (North Indian standard)' was criticized.
122. Ibid., pp. 56-7 and 75-6 for the Mulki League's position. For the Ittehad, see Sherwani, 'The Evolution of the Legislature', and [Jung], *Hyderabad in Retrospect*.
123. One of their contact points had been the Educational Conference, which brought together urban and provincial western-educated men for annual conferences. Tirtha, *Memoirs*, p. 67.
124. Ibid., pp. 81-2.
125. Ibid., pp. 85-6. Regional leaders like Tirtha were not members of the provisional committee, which resigned when notified by the Hyderabad government that the proposed Congress would be illegal and when the regional leaders asked it to do so to 'pave the way for action'.
126. Sherwani, 'Evolution of the Legislature,' p. 430.
127. [Jung], *Hyderabad in Retrospect*; Mudiraj, *Pictorial Hyderabad*, I, biographies of the prime ministers.
128. Elliott, 'Decline of a Patrimonial Regime', pp. 31-2. I concur, despite considerable government publication concerning municipal government, urban housing, co-operative societies, etc.
129. *Deccan Chronicle*, 22 May 1938, p. 11.
130. *Deccan Chronicle*, 15 May 1938, p. 9.
131. *Deccan Chronicle*, 22 May 1938, p. 14; 7 August 1938, p. 16.
132. For the civic affairs conference, *Deccan Chronicle*, 12 June 1938, p. 15; for the banning of Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, 26 June 1938, p. 14.
133. *Deccan Chronicle*, 29 May 1938, p. 13; 9 October 1938, p. 22.
134. The phrase is that of Sherwani, 'Evolution of the Legislature', p. 434. *The Report of the Reforms Committee 1938*, Hyderabad, 1939, provided for representation according to economic, not communal, constituencies. Joint electorates were proposed, and elected members would account for 42 of the

- 85 legislators, but 50 per cent of the seats were reserved for Muslims.
135. The government had warned earlier that no movement aimed at responsible government would be tolerated. More specific objections were to the name 'Congress' and to the 'communal' or almost entirely Hindu membership. Swami Ramananda Tirtha, *First Class Tragedy*, Poona, 1940, printed the correspondence between the State Congress and the government; his *Memoirs*, pp. 85–6, recounts this episode. A justification of the government's policy appears in Salam, *Hyderabad Struggle*, pp. 47–57.
  136. Tirtha, *Memoirs*, pp. 86–109; Salam, *Hyderabad Struggle*, pp. 53–5, 57.
  137. Tirtha, *Memoirs*, pp. 67 and 131.
  138. *Deccan Chronicle*, 23 October 1938 and succeeding days, for organizations and events; Tirtha, *Memoirs*, pp. 91 ff. and [Jung], *Hyderabad in Retrospect*, pp. 4–5.
  139. Tirtha, *Memoirs*, p. 100. But the leadership was with the Maharashtra Conference, as senior leaders from Hyderabad city or from the Andhra and Karnataka areas did not 'come forward'. The leadership of the Andhra Conference at this time rested with urban Mulki, members of the Mulki League. *Deccan Chronicle*, August 1938, p. 11.
  140. Tirtha, *Memoirs*, pp. 106–13, for the relationship to Gandhi; Salam, *Hyderabad Struggle*, pp. 70–5, for the Arya Samaj's increasing role.
  141. Salam, *Hyderabad Struggle*, p. 75; S.T. Hollins, *No Ten Commandments*, London, 1958, p. 237.
  142. *Deccan Chronicle*, 23 October 1938, recounting the arrest of Pandit Narinderji, whose Arya Samaj was in the heart of the Sultan Bazar area. As he was a 'pukka Mulki', the article notes, he could not be deported.
  143. *Deccan Chronicle*, 4 December 1938, pp. 9–10, tells of Hindu hostel inmates at Osmania singing this, with the result that 115 were expelled and all Osmania students save ten or twelve then observed a hartal. Also Tirtha, *Memoirs*, pp. 97–103.
  144. Salam, *Hyderabad Struggle*, p. 74.
  145. *Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad*, Hyderabad, 1956, IV, p. 196, cites the role of the Ittehad in keeping the State Congress banned. Lothian, *Kingdoms of Yesterday*, p. 184, states that the government used the war as an excuse to delay reforms, as both the Ittehad and the Congress opposed various aspects of them. Only the *Deccan Chronicle* responded positively to the satyagraha, inaugurating a section titled 'News from the Districts'.
  146. Elliott, 'Decline of a Patrimonial Regime', pp. 29–30.
  147. Smith, 'Hyderabad: Muslim Tragedy', p. 50; his view is shared by [Jung], *Hyderabad in Retrospect*.
  148. For the refugees, see Smith, 'Hyderabad: Muslim Tragedy', p. 45; and Kishen, *45 Years a Rebel*, pp. 146 and 164, in letters to the Nizam of 17 June and 1 June 1948. On Jinnah and the loan of Mir Laik Ali from Pakistan, see V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, Bombay, 1956, p. 333; and [Jung], *Hyderabad in Retrospect*, pp. 6–11.
  149. See Maharajah Kishen Pershad's Urdu speech, 10 April 1939, in Salam, *Hyderabad Struggle*, pp. 113–20.
  150. Raja Dharm Karan welcomed the 'statesmanlike move' as head of the Religi-

- ous Leaders' Association. *New Hyderabad* (from the public relations office of the government), I, 6 and 7 June 1947, p. 6.
151. Letters from C. Sri Kishen to the Nizam, in his *45 Years a Rebel*, protesting policies and appointments in great detail.

# 3

## BARODA The Structure of a 'Progressive' State

DAVID HARDIMAN

### I

Baroda had a reputation for being one of the most progressive of the Indian states. It was in advance of British India in many fields of material progress. Even today, many people who live in what used to be Baroda state sigh nostalgically for the days when the Gaikwad ruled. However, one needs to ask what kind of person preferred the Baroda Raj, and why Baroda was ahead of British India in some respects but lagging in others, especially in the field of representative government. This chapter will examine a few aspects of the society and politics of Baroda state during the two hundred years of its existence. Our main task will be to map out the social alliances on which the stability of the state depended, and to use this analysis to throw light on political developments within the state.

### II

The rise of the Gaikwad family dated from the early eighteenth century when it produced two able warlords, the father and son, Pilaji and Damaji Gaikwad, at the time when Maratha power was expanding most rapidly. The family, which was of a minor agricultural caste, came from the area around Poona, where they served as village headmen. Pilaji Gaikwad began his career as an officer in the Maratha army in command of about fifty horsemen. In 1722, he managed to forge several clever and effective alliances between his Maratha war-band and some local Gujarati powers, against the Mughal viceroy of Gujarat. These alliances led to the Gujarati war of 1724-5, in which the Mughals were defeated, although not driven from Gujarat. Pilaji's success was consolidated over the next forty years by his son Damaji Gaikwad. However, the Peshwa in Poona continued to claim half the revenues of Gujarat, and forcibly prevented the Gaikwads from becoming its unchallenged rulers. After Damaji died in 1768, a succession struggle followed between



his two sons. In 1772, one of these sons, Fatehsingh, allied with the British against Govind Gaikwad, who was supported by the Peshwa. Fatehsingh promised to grant revenue rights to the British if they supported his cause. Thus began a process through which, over the next fifty years, the Gaikwads lost gradually more and more power to the British. In 1817, after the final defeat of the Peshwa, the Gujarati lands claimed by the Marathas were divided between the British and the Gaikwads. The Gaikwad's share became known as Baroda state. The British took about 10,000 square miles; the Gaikwads, about 8,000 square miles. The poor lands in the foothills surrounding the Gujarati plains were left largely under the control of local warlords, as petty princely states. The land was divided between the two powers on the basis of the revenue wealth of each small tract, rather than on the basis of ease of administration, and the map of Gujarat took on the appearance of a jigsaw puzzle. In many cases, groups of villages under one power were stuck like islands in the territory of the other.

The Gaikwadi territories were divided into four distinct areas, each similar in size to a British district. The southern tract, known as Navsari District, formed a mosaic with the British Surat District. The western areas of Navsari District consisted of some of the best farmland in the state. Fine varieties of cotton, fruit (including a particularly luscious variety of mango), and sugarcane grew in these rich soils. The eastern part of Navsari lay in the foothills of the western ghats and was inhabited by tribal people. Here the soil was poor, and revenue low. The central tract, known as Baroda District, formed a more compact territory, except in the north-western portions. The south-western part of this district bordered on the British district of Broach, being part of the tract known as the Kanham. Although bleak and treeless, it produced some of the best cotton in India. The north-western part of Baroda District was entangled with British Kheda District in a tract known as the Charotar. This area had the richest farmlands in the state, and was renowned for its tobacco. It was the heartland of the caste known as Kanbi, or Patidar,<sup>1</sup> a group which was always important in the politics of Gujarat. The eastern parts of Baroda District were less prosperous. The largest of the four districts of the state was the northern district of Kadi. It consisted of a monotonous black-soil plain which produced good cotton. The fourth district of Amreli was made up from the scattered Kathiawari territories of the Gaikwad. These

Kathiawari lands were on the whole fertile, except in the westernmost portion of Okhamandal, where the land was barren.

The economy of Baroda state depended on agriculture, and especially cotton. In 1904, about 68 per cent of the farmland of the state was under food crops. These were mostly grown by peasants for their own consumption. About 32 per cent of the land was under cash crops. By far the most important of these cash crops was cotton, which took up 22 per cent of the farmland of the state.<sup>2</sup> The success of the cotton harvest and cotton prices were of critical importance to the state. British Gujarat was less dependent on agriculture than Baroda, for on the partition of Gujarat, the British had taken the great trading and manufacturing cities of Ahmedabad and Surat for themselves.

There were few great landlords in Baroda state.<sup>3</sup> The rich plains of Gujarat had since time immemorial been coveted and exploited by conquerors, so that no one group of zamindars had ever been able to consolidate their power. In the fifteenth century, the dominant Rajputs had been swept into the hills by the Muslims, and the local farming caste of Kanbis had been placed in positions of local authority under direct Muslim control. When this control was relaxed in the eighteenth century, a few Kanbis managed to consolidate estates, but it was a period of violent changes in fortune, and few managed to become great landlords. As a result, the majority of the landlord class were small landlords who owned barely enough land to live off the rents of their tenants. This class made up about one per cent of the rural population. After 1875, members of this class tended to look to the cities for employment in the bureaucracy, the professions and commerce.

The most important class in Baroda state was that of landowning peasant cultivators. About half the total rural population came into this category. In feudal times, members of this class held their land as shareholders of villages. In the late nineteenth century, they gained ownership rights in lands, and turned increasingly towards methods of capitalist farming. This class can be subdivided into rich and middle peasants. The rich peasants cultivated their land with the help of hired labourers; the middle peasants cultivated their land with the help of their family only.<sup>4</sup> In the richer tracts of the state, such as the Charotar, there were probably as many rich peasants as middle peasants. In the poorer tracts, middle peasants probably outnumbered rich peasants by about four to one. How-

ever, there was considerable social mobility within the class of landowning cultivators, so that it is hard to determine with any accuracy the ratio of rich to middle peasants. In periods of hardship there were more middle peasants; in periods of prosperity there were more rich peasants.

The class of tenant farmers was much smaller, making up about seven per cent of the rural population. In many cases, their landlords were rich peasants who cultivated the better parts of their land with the help of hired labourers, and rented out the poorer parts of their land to tenants. About fifteen per cent of the rural population were landless agricultural labourers. In central and north Gujarat, they entered into an annual contract with a rich peasant to provide labour in return for wages and a daily meal of *dal* and *roti*. In Navsari District, agricultural labourers tended to be tied to one master for life, in the manner of a serf. A further two per cent of the rural population lived from other agricultural pursuits, such as livestock keeping and breeding, and market gardening. About eight per cent of the rural population led a parasitical and often nomadic life on the fringes of society. In this class were found beggars, vagabonds, criminals, hawkers, dacoits and prostitutes.

Besides these agricultural classes, there were other groups inseparable from the society of rural India. The largest was that of the artisans, those whose main income came from the production of artifacts for the farmers. They made up about eight per cent of the population. Next in size, making up about five per cent of the rural population, was the class of traders and money-lenders. The priestly classes, the pandits, sadhus, fakirs and temple guardians, made up about three per cent of the population. Lastly, there was a class of those following various respectable professions, such as teachers, government servants, lawyers, doctors, policemen and clerks. This class made up about one per cent of the rural population.

In Baroda city, there was an important class of Vania financiers. They had first come to Baroda in the eighteenth century, as the personal financiers to the Gaikwads. Although they had been integrated into the political system of Baroda state as official state bankers, they continued to run their banks as private enterprises. They were worth vast sums of money. For instance, in 1825 the five recognized state bankers were owed over Rs 13 million by the state.<sup>5</sup>

The power of the Gaikwads in Gujarat was based originally on an informal alliance between the Gaikwad, various local Gujarati no-

tables and some rich Vania financiers. The alliance was one of mutual interest. The local notables allied with the Gaikwads to rid Gujarat of the Muslim overlords. The Gaikwads, in their turn, needed the support of the local notables to control the localities of their state. The Gaikwads needed the support of the Vania financiers to finance their army and court. The Vanias, in their turn, needed the support of the Gaikwad to ensure that the money they lent throughout Gujarat was returned to them with interest. The nature of this alliance gave rise to a system of government peculiar to Baroda state. In the eighteenth century the system was very loose. The description that follows is of its more institutionalized form which existed between 1819 and 1875.

The alliance with the local notables produced the *ijara*, or tax-farming system. The essential feature of this system was that a tax-farmer was granted freedom to exploit the peasantry of his area. The Gaikwad sold tax-farming rights to rich Gujaratis for large sums of money. The tax-farmers had to make agreements with local notables who extracted the revenue from the peasantry. In many cases the local notables bought the tax-farming rights from the Gaikwads themselves. They were officially permitted to take two and a half per cent of the revenue they collected as their payment, but as the Gaikwad made no attempt to supervise their activities, they invariably took more. They had considerable power in their localities, for besides collecting the revenue and being able to invent new taxes at will, they acted as the local police and judiciary. They often lived in small fortresses with their own private armies. They made agreements with village leaders, who promised to collect the revenue in their villages in return for a cut of the proceeds. If the village leaders refused to hand over the sums demanded, they were tortured until they paid.<sup>6</sup>

The Vania financiers were integrated into the tax-farming system as state bankers. When the Gaikwads needed money, they did not take their share of the revenue direct from the tax-farmers, but issued a money order on one of the state bankers, who paid the required amount. The bankers recouped their money, with added interest, from the tax-farmers. If a tax-farmer tried to default on his payment to a banker, the Gaikwad was responsible for compelling him to pay.

This system of rule provided little stability. It depended to a large extent on the ability of the local notables to exercise firm control in



their localities. In Gujarat there was no very obvious class to fulfil this role. The local notables who had allied with the Gaikwad in the eighteenth century were often mere upstarts, without power in depth. When they failed in battle or fell out with the Gaikwad, there were plenty of other landlords to take their place. They also had little control over the peasant cultivators, as would have been the case in a society dominated by great feudal landlords. As a result, there were frequent local troubles.

The British tried to stabilize the situation by guaranteeing the position of certain local notables. Written guarantees were given in which the British promised to maintain the privileges of certain landlords so long as they continued to provide military service for the Gaikwad. Guarantees were given also to Vania financiers that they would receive their loans back with interest so long as they continued to lend to the Gaikwad.<sup>7</sup> The British even guaranteed the tax-farming rights of some local notables. These guarantees were enforced. For instance, when in 1829 the Gaikwad of the day attempted to deprive the tax-farmer of Navsari of his guaranteed position, the British retaliated by confiscating the rich tracts of Navsari and the Charotar. The Gaikwad had no choice but to reinstate the tax-farmer.<sup>8</sup> The guarantee system provided a charter for misrule, and the Gaikwad lost control over the landlords. The landlords, in turn, could not control the village shareholders. The only element of stability in the state was the strong control which the village shareholders exercised over village society.

The final downfall of this chaotic system was brought about by the personal misrule of two Gaikwads who managed to alienate not only the local notables, but also the village shareholders. Khanderao Gaikwad, who reigned from 1856 to 1870, attempted to break the power of the local notables by implementing a ryotwari revenue settlement, on the lines of the ryotwari settlements in the surrounding British districts of Gujarat. In other words, he attempted to bypass the local notables and collect the revenue direct from the peasants. But when he attempted to abolish the privileges of these over-mighty subjects, they raised such a clamour that he had to cancel the measure.<sup>9</sup> Khanderao then ordered surveys to be made on which the proposed ryotwari settlement could be based. The local notables merely manipulated these surveys in their own interests, so that if anything, the surveys consolidated, rather than undermined their power. These attempts at reform were accom-

panied by annual increases in the land revenue to pay for Khanderao's extravagant habits. It was possible to satisfy such demands during the boom in cotton prices brought about by the American Civil War, but after prices fell in the mid-1860s, it became increasingly difficult for the peasants to pay the enhanced demands. Several village leaders protested, but they were merely tortured until they agreed to pay.<sup>10</sup>

Khanderao died in 1870, and was succeeded by the incapable Malharrao Gaikwad. Whereas Khanderao had attempted to cut down the power of the local notables, Malharrao allowed them complete licence to exploit their localities in return for lavish bribes. However, he did not always honour the bribes, and in the end he alienated as many of the local notables as Khanderao. The costs of these bribes were passed onto the peasants in the form of increased revenue. The village shareholders reacted to this unbridled exploitation by complaining to the British Resident in Baroda city, an action demonstrating their political sophistication. The poorer peasants reacted by fleeing Baroda state and taking to banditry.<sup>11</sup> In mid-1873, these fugitives began to raid and plunder villages in British Gujarat. The combination of the complaints by the richer peasants and the banditry of the poorer peasants forced the British to take action, and a commission of enquiry was appointed to examine the state of Baroda. In the report of February 1874, the commission concluded that the Baroda government was riddled with abuses and that Malharrao was not capable of carrying out the necessary reforms.<sup>12</sup> Although Malharrao was cautioned, he proved incapable of controlling his tax-farmers. In October 1874, the Baroda Resident reported that the peasants were being harassed as much as ever. Baroda was too large and important a state for such misrule to continue, especially as it had an adverse effect on adjoining British areas of Gujarat. As a result, in early 1875, Malharrao was forced to abdicate by the British. Malharrao's refusal to listen to the lamentations of the peasantry had proved to be his downfall.

### III

When the British wished to bring about reforms in princely states, they often used a period of minority of the ruler to place the state under hand-picked reformers. In the case of Baroda, they created an artificial minority by deposing Malharrao and replacing him with a twelve-year-old boy from an obscure lineage of the Gaikwad.

family which lived in Maharashtra. The young ruler was given the title of Sayajirao III. The state was placed in the capable hands of Sir T. Madhava Rao, who had been a very successful Dewan in Travancore state. A Bombay civil servant, F.A.H. Elliot, was appointed tutor to the young Maharaja. Sayajirao became the first Gaikwad to receive a western education.<sup>13</sup>

Sayajirao's reign, which lasted from 1875 to 1939, can be divided into four main periods. The first was the period of minority from 1875 to 1881 when Sir T. Madhava Rao was the effective ruler of the state. Madhava Rao was given a free hand to implement important administrative reforms. But a rivalry grew up between Madhava Rao and Sayajirao's tutor, Elliot, leading to Madhava Rao's premature retirement in 1882. The period of Elliot's influence lasted from 1881 to 1895 and was a time of continuing reform in the state. Elliot was by no means popular in British government circles, due to his championship of Baroda interests against British interests, and in 1895 he was forced to revert to British service.<sup>14</sup> In the third period, from 1895 to 1916, Sayajirao had no lieutenant on whom he could rely, and as a result he got himself into severe trouble with the British, more through lack of tact than through design. In the last period of Sayajirao's reign, the state was governed by two able Dewans, Manubhai Mehta (1916-26), and V.T. Krishnamachariar (1926-44). This was a period of more harmonious relations with the British, and continuing reforms within the state. During this latter period, Sayajirao spent most of his time away from Baroda, and he was not involved in the day-to-day administration of the state.

Sayajirao was an extremely popular and effective ruler, despite many shortcomings in his character. He was a proud man of autocratic temperament, and he was prepared to show his annoyance when the British did not treat him as an equal. As a result, he was often unpopular with the British government. His greatest article of faith was the belief that western institutions could greatly enhance the power and prestige of his state. He acted consistently with this belief throughout his long reign. Sayajirao was not an original thinker, but he was extremely receptive to the original thought of others, and depended a great deal on good advisers. He was of limited intellect, and proved incapable of exercising control over all the departments of his government. The periods in which he tried to rule Baroda single-handed invariably ended in a breakdown in his

health and a long holiday in Europe. As his reign progressed, he took a less and less active part in the running of Baroda and relied increasingly on capable Dewans.

The essential features of the reforms which made Baroda into a model state were the forging of a new alliance between the Gaikwad and the large and important class of village shareholders, the establishment of a modern bureaucracy, and the development of trade and industry in the state. These reforms will be examined in turn.

The village shareholders were won over to the new regime by a reduction in the land revenue and the granting of ownership rights in land. In 1875, Madhava Rao reduced the land revenue by twelve lakhs of rupees. He then ruled that those who held sharehold rights in the villages would in future be recognized as legal owners of the land in the western sense.<sup>15</sup> This measure created a large class of landowning peasant cultivators with a stake in the system. The support of this class was maintained by continual reductions of the land revenue over the years. In 1875, 84 per cent of state revenue came from land revenue. Almost nothing was returned to the peasants. In 1875, Madhava Rao reduced the land revenue and began to provide services to the peasants, such as schools and public works. By 1876-7, only 71 per cent of state revenue came from land revenue.<sup>16</sup> Over the next fifty years, the proportion of land revenue to total revenue declined year by year; in the 1920s it went below the 50 per cent mark, and by 1934-5 it was down to 33 per cent.<sup>17</sup> In 1938, the threat of peasant agitations against the land revenue caused the Baroda government to slash the land revenue by over 20 per cent, so that by 1944-5, land revenue only made up 24 per cent of total state revenue.<sup>18</sup> These lost revenues were replaced initially by an excise tax on liquor and opium. Between 1876-7 and 1884-5, excise as a percentage of the total state revenue rose from 4 per cent to 16 per cent.<sup>19</sup> In effect, this meant that the 'respectable' peasants were taxed less and less, while poorer peasants, agricultural labourers and the rural parasitical classes, who had a taste for liquor and opium, were taxed more and more. The poor thus had to pay a disproportionate burden of the taxation.

Before 1875, Baroda state was under what Max Weber would have called a patrimonial system of government.<sup>20</sup> Office holders owned their positions personally and ran their offices with the help of their own followers, relatives and friends. They had almost total power in their sphere of responsibility. One of the essential innova-



tions brought about by British rule in India as a whole was the imposition of a modern bureaucratic system of government. Local notables and hereditary office holders lost their powers to officials appointed by merit, who were paid regular salaries by the state. What had once been considered as an office holder's worthy solidarity with kith and kin came to be seen as nepotism and corruption. State-employed officials became the leading local political powers, and also the representatives of the people. This change brought considerable dislocation and discontent, and as a result few Indian states brought in a full modern bureaucratic system as was found in British India. Baroda state was one of the few.

The bureaucratic reforms were helped considerably by the broad-based nature of power in the peasant society of Gujarat. The local notables were unable to gain wide support for any stand against the loss of their powers, especially after their excesses during the reign of Malharrao. The British refused to enforce the old guarantees. Madhava Rao, moreover, lulled the local notables into a sense of false security by compensating them for the money they had lost during the reigns of Khanderao and Malharrao. He continued to employ the old tax-farmers as collectors of the revenue, but placed them under the control of the taluka officer, the *vahivatdar*, who was a career bureaucrat. In this way he kept them occupied and quiet.

Madhava Rao proceeded extremely cautiously in establishing the power of the bureaucracy at the village level. The Baroda government could not afford to alienate the village shareholders, for a threat to their local dominance soon turned into a threat to the stability of the state. Marx wrote: 'By its very nature, small-holding property forms a suitable basis for an all-powerful and innumerable bureaucracy.'<sup>21</sup> Madhava Rao likewise realized that the land would have to become the property of the peasants before the bureaucracy could penetrate to village level. The introduction of the principle of landownership undermined the internal cohesion of the villages, making each peasant into an individualistic owner of a plot of farmland. Within a couple of decades, the Baroda government was able to introduce a ryotwari system with hardly a whimper of protest.<sup>22</sup> The revenue settlements carried out between 1884 and 1907 greatly extended the power of the bureaucracy without changing the patterns of local dominance to any serious extent.

Under the new system, power was concentrated into the hands of

the Dewan and his subordinates. Although an Executive Council existed, consisting of the Dewan, Deputy Dewan and two leading officials, there was no provision for the nomination of non-officials to this body before 1940. In this respect, Baroda state lagged behind British India where non-officials were appointed to provincial councils after 1909. The same applied to the Legislative Council, which was founded in 1907. Although Baroda state was far in advance of most princely states in having such a body at all,<sup>23</sup> it was likewise under the control of the bureaucracy. The Dewan was president, the Council could only give 'advice', and there was a majority of officials and government nominees amongst the eighteen members. At the local level, the new bureaucratic system followed the British pattern closely. Each of the four districts of the state was placed under a revenue officer, the *Suba*. The *Subas* were responsible to the revenue minister, the *Sar-Suba*. Talukas were administered by *vahivatdars* who were directly under the *Suba*. The system permitted a greater concentration of power than in any other large princely state. Even in a 'modern' princely state like Mysore the bureaucracy appears to have been less powerful at a local level than in Baroda.<sup>24</sup> In Baroda state after 1875, primary political power at the taluka level lay with the bureaucracy rather than with local notables.

The Baroda bureaucracy maintained its political power through the control of state expenditure. In the past, most of the revenue had gone towards the upkeep of the Gaikwad and the maintenance of his army, the police and the bureaucracy. Between 1876-7 and 1934-5, state expenditure under these heads declined from 70 per cent to 33 per cent of total state expenditure. By 1934-5, most of the revenue was spent by the bureaucracy on public works, education, and various improvement projects and aids to the development of Baroda state. For instance, between 1876-7 and 1933-4, educational expenditure rose from 1 per cent to 17 per cent of total state expenditure. During the same period, expenditure on public works rose from 5 per cent to 13 per cent.<sup>25</sup> Very little of this money was spent by the municipalities and local boards which had existed in Baroda state since 1877. During the period 1884-5 to 1944-5, grants to local government bodies fell by nearly a lakh of rupees, and in terms of percentage of the total state expenditure, declined from 2.5 per cent to 0.7 per cent.<sup>26</sup> These bodies had little effective power so long as they were starved of funds in this manner.

Financial, and thus political power in the state, remained in the hands of the bureaucracy.

The development of a modern educational system played a vital role in the reforms as a whole. The alliance between the Gaikwad and the landowning peasants could only be maintained if members of this class could gain political power through joining the bureaucracy. As entry to the bureaucracy was by competitive examination, this could only be achieved if good educational facilities were provided in the villages.

Before 1871, Baroda state did not have a single government school. It was only at the personal insistence of the Governor of Bombay that Malharrao agreed to open a few such schools.<sup>27</sup> The first high school was opened at Baroda in 1871. In 1875, Madhava Rao created the Vernacular Education Department, and in 1877, he opened the Baroda State Library. In 1882, Baroda College, which was affiliated to Bombay University, took its first thirty-three students.<sup>28</sup> In 1891, an order was passed that each village had to maintain a schoolmaster as a village servant, and schools were opened in all villages in which sixteen children were willing to attend. In 1907, primary education was made free and compulsory for boys aged seven to twelve and girls aged seven to ten. In practice, it proved impossible to force low-caste children to go to school, so that the reform chiefly benefited the higher castes.<sup>29</sup> By 1945, over 300,000 children were attending the 2,614 schools run by the state.<sup>30</sup> At the lower levels, the teaching was often poor, but at the higher levels, and especially at Baroda College, the teaching was of a high quality.

The literacy figures for Baroda state showed an impressive rate of growth. Other princely states in Gujarat, and even British Gujarat, lagged behind badly. At the beginning of Sayajirao's reign, Baroda was behind British India in literacy rates. In 1891, there was 8 per cent literacy in Baroda state, as opposed to 10 per cent literacy in British Gujarat. In Baroda city there was 21 per cent literacy, as opposed to 24 per cent in Bombay city. By 1931 there had been a complete reverse. In this year, there was 21 per cent literacy in Baroda state, as opposed to 13 per cent in British Gujarat. In Bombay city, the literacy rate had remained at 24 per cent, whereas in Baroda city it had risen to 41 per cent.<sup>31</sup>

As a result of these educational advances, the higher echelons of the Baroda civil service came to be filled with Gujarati Brahmans,

Patidars, Vantias and Muslims. Under the old regime, there had been a high concentration of Marathis at the top levels of the bureaucracy. By 1921, over two-thirds of the gazetted government officials in the state were Gujaratis. Of these, 30 per cent were Gujarati Brahmans, 17 per cent were Patidars, 14 per cent were Muslims and 11 per cent were Vantias.<sup>32</sup> Service in the higher levels of the bureaucracy brought financial rewards as well as political power. For instance, Manibhai Jashabhai Patel, a Patidar of Nadiad in British Kheda District, started his career in the Bombay provincial service. At the most, he could have earned Rs 200 a month in British service. He transferred to Baroda service, and by 1888 was earning Rs 1,600 a month as Deputy Dewan. This qualified him for a pension five times higher than the pension he could have received from the British if he had remained in his original position.<sup>33</sup> In 1890, he became the first Patidar to hold the position of Dewan of Baroda state.

There were few demands from the landowning peasantry of Baroda state for the democratic systems of government which were being developed in British India after 1909. This was because their interests were looked after adequately by the bureaucracy. Officials, often from a peasant background themselves, were in close touch with the peasantry at all levels, so that peasant demands could be met before they became a source of grievance against the state. Demands for democracy in Baroda came not from the landowning peasantry, but from the intelligentsia of Baroda city, a class which the government was able to ignore with impunity.

The major drawback to the alliance between the government and the landowning peasantry was the cost of its maintenance. Between 1876-7 and 1944-5, state expenditure rose from about Rs 10 million a year to Rs 37 million a year. During this period, the income from the landowning peasants, in other words the land revenue, only rose from Rs 8 million to Rs 10 million a year. To maintain the alliance, the state had to search for new sources of wealth. The most important lay in the development of trade and industry within the state.

In the nineteenth century, Baroda was not a centre for trade and industry. Baroda city was originally a small town which rose to prominence as the capital of the Gaikwads. It was not a centre for trade such as Ahmedabad, and its prosperity was based almost entirely on land revenue. The great bankers of Baroda did not



invest in trade, but lent money at interest to the Gaikwad and the tax-farmers. Trade was hampered by a mass of petty tolls on roads throughout the state. In 1876-7, Madhava Rao abolished the majority of these tolls, only retaining customs posts at state frontiers. Madhava Rao also started to build a network of cheap light railways. He calculated that in the long run it was cheaper to build railways than metalled roads, because of the shortage of suitable road-building materials in the hill-less alluvial plains of Gujarat.<sup>34</sup> Baroda became the first state in India to build its own railways, and by 1934-5, 707 miles of railways had been built. Only 21 miles were broad gauge, the rest was metre gauge (330 miles) and narrow gauge (356 miles). Although Rs 54 million had been spent on developing this system, the railways earned 9 per cent of the total revenue in 1934-5.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, besides providing an important service and being a necessary part of the modern infrastructure of the state, Baroda's railway system proved a good investment and an important earner of revenue.

Between 1876 and 1925, no attempt was made to make customs duties a major source of revenue. In 1909, all import and export duties were abolished in an attempt to promote industry in Baroda state, except at seaports, where duty at a rate similar to the rate in British India had to be levied by treaty with the British government. As a result of these reforms, customs revenue declined to about 0.5 per cent of the total revenue.<sup>36</sup> In the 1920s, the emphasis shifted back to revenue from customs, with the development of modern docking facilities at Port Okha, in the westernmost territories of the state in Kathiawar. This port was completed in 1925. Within eighteen months, the British government had imposed a customs cordon at the borders of Kathiawar, in an attempt to prevent Port Okha taking customs revenue from the ports of British India, and especially Bombay. This was a grave setback to the development of the customs revenue, and it formed one of the main grievances of Baroda state at the Round Table Conferences in London in the early 1930s. In 1936, an agreement was reached and the British customs cordon was lifted, largely through the efforts of V.T. Krishnamachariar. Customs revenue rose considerably as a result, so that by 1944-5 it was yielding 5 per cent of the total state revenue.

In the late nineteenth century, Baroda lagged behind British Gujarat in the development of modern industries. By 1875, Gu-

jarati financiers were starting to invest their money in textile mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad. In Baroda, tax-farming continued to provide the main source for investment. In 1875-6, tax-farming was abolished and a state treasury was established. It was hoped that the financiers of Baroda would invest their capital in industrial development. However, the establishment of legal ownership of land meant that it was now safe to lend to the peasants, using land as a security. The financiers' capital was soon tied up in loans to the peasantry.

The Baroda government attempted to set this right by becoming a patron of industrial development. Sayajirao had been impressed by the potential of modern industry during his tours of Europe, and he believed that Baroda city itself could become a great industrial centre. Before 1920, the little industrialization which took place in Baroda was almost entirely the result of handsome backing by the state. By themselves, the big Vania financiers were not willing to risk their capital in industry. In 1884, the Baroda government established the first modern factory in the state, a sugar mill at Gandevi. It was not a success, and had to close after ten years. Between 1891 and 1893, the government gave loans amounting to more than Rs 230,000 to merchants who were willing to establish factories. But the merchants were inexperienced, their enterprises failed, and most of the loans had to be written off.<sup>37</sup> It was only during the period of the swadeshi craze between 1905 and 1910 that industrialization in the state finally got off the ground. During this period, a special department of commerce and industry was established, and customs duties of all kinds were abolished as a stimulus to trade and industry. The Bank of Baroda was set up to finance large-scale industrial projects.<sup>38</sup> Three new factories, established as a result of government loans, were completed in time to take advantage of the industrial boom created by the First World War.

Before the 1930s, industrialization in Baroda was on a small scale. The real breakthrough occurred during the period when V.T. Krishnamachariar was Dewan (1926-44). It was only during this period that private enterprise came forward in a big way to finance large-scale industry in the state. The big capitalists were attracted to Baroda by a variety of economic incentives, such as tax concessions, free or partially free use of natural resources, and provision of technical advice and help by the state. The Baroda government even undertook to make surveys for capitalists, to see whether

industrial development was practicable.<sup>39</sup> During the period 1921 to 1944, the paid-up capital of joint-stock companies in the state increased thirteenfold, from Rs 15 million to Rs 200 million.<sup>40</sup> During the same period, the number of factory workers increased from 11,000 to 43,000.<sup>41</sup> The textile industry was by far the most important; in 1944 it employed over three-quarters of the industrial work force.<sup>42</sup> The chemical industry came second, the most important firm being Alembic Chemicals. A major expansion of the chemical industry took place in the 1940s after the establishment of chemical factories in the state by the Tatas and Sarabhais, but the real potential of this industry was only realized after 1948.

Although industrialization of Baroda was a modest success story, it was only on a very small scale before 1940, and it was mainly concerned with the processing of a local raw material, namely cotton. Baroda lagged far behind the British Indian cities of Bombay and Ahmedabad in the development of textile industries. The development of heavy industry was stifled throughout India by the British, and in this respect, Baroda did no better than British India. It was only after 1930 that Baroda began to attract the capital of big industrialists, such as the Tatas and Sarabhais, and before the results of this development could be seen, Baroda lost its independence and was merged into Bombay state.

Before 1938, the urban middle classes were taxed only lightly. Before 1904, there was no income tax in Baroda state. Instead, there were taxes on professions and castes called *veros*. These weighed most heavily on the lower castes. In 1904, all *veros* were abolished and replaced by a graduated income tax for incomes of Rs 300 and above. The rates were mild; in its first year only 0.9 per cent of total state revenue was derived from income tax. Although the rates were increased slightly over the next thirty-five years, income tax only became of major importance in 1938. In this year, the stability of the state was threatened by possible widespread peasant agitations, which will be examined below. Here it is sufficient to note that the development of new sources of urban wealth stood the Baroda government in good stead, for V.T. Krishnamachariar was able to buy off the peasants by reducing the land revenue by 20 per cent and raising income tax and super tax rates sharply. After 1938, a graduated income tax was levied on incomes over Rs 2,000 a year. This affected about 12,500 people. Super tax was levied at a flat rate of 6.25 per cent on all incomes exceeding one lakh of

rupees. The two taxes brought in 24 per cent of the total state revenue after 1938. Urban wealth thus saved the alliance between the Gaikwad and the landowning peasantry, and the Gaikwad received his dividend for his investment in the commercial and industrial development of his state.

The alliance between the Gaikwad and the landowning peasantry had been brought about with little social turmoil and no violence. This would not have been the case if Baroda had been one of those states in which vast tracts were held by great landlords. The reforms were likewise favoured by the wealth of the plains of Gujarat. This wealth lay at the heart of Baroda success stories, such as the development of a modern bureaucracy and education system, the railway building programme, and the growth of Baroda city into an industrial centre second only to Ahmedabad in Gujarat. In the next section, we shall see how the social alliance and the success of these reforms affected the development of modern political activities in Baroda state in the first half of the twentieth century.

#### IV

Before the 1930s, modern political movements in India were confined largely to the areas under British rule. Attempts to organize such movements in princely states were usually suppressed autocratically. This was to some extent the case in Baroda state. However, Baroda was not a monolithic autocracy. Since 1875, there had been an independent judiciary which had established a reputation for a considerable degree of independence from the executive under a series of notable chief justices.<sup>43</sup> This legal fraternity provided a nucleus for potential opposition to the Baroda government. In spite of this, attempts to organize political protests on lines similar to those in British India were never a great success in Baroda. The reasons for this will be examined in this section. The first half of the section will deal with the extremist nationalist movement in Baroda. This movement never represented a threat to the state, and it was allowed to thrive. The latter part will look at the attempt to build up an anti-government party in Baroda linked to the Congress Party.

The extremist nationalist movement, which flourished during the first decade of the twentieth century, was largely organized by Brahman nationalists from Maharashtra, who found Baroda to be a congenial centre for their activities. The leaders were the Bengali,



Aurobindo Ghose, who was a professor at Baroda College from 1892 to 1906, and K.G. Deshpande, a Marathi intellectual who served as a *Suba* in the Baroda Revenue Department. Sayajirao needed men of I.C.S. calibre, and to get such men he could not afford scruples about their political leanings. Sayajirao was never a serious nationalist; he dabbled with nationalism during this period, but abandoned the doctrine as soon as it became a threat to his power. He was prepared to give these intellectuals a free rein, especially as their doctrines were unsympathetic towards liberal bourgeois democracy. He hoped that the benefit to the state would outweigh the displeasure he would incur from the ruling race. This was a miscalculation which nearly lost him his throne.

The Baroda extremists believed in the doctrines of Hindu patriotism. These doctrines were, in Aurobindo's words, '... an attempt to relegate the dominant bourgeois to his old obscurity, to transform the bourgeois into the Samurai and through him to extend the working of the Samurai spirit to the whole nation'.<sup>44</sup> In other words, Aurobindo believed that Japan had met the challenge of the western world by fostering the feudal ethics of the Samurai. He believed that Hindus likewise had to reassert the ethics of their feudal past in order to develop the strength to throw off the British. In such doctrines, Baroda state served as an example of the superiority of Indian self-rule over British rule. Many nationalists believed that India could be rejuvenated under the rule of enlightened Indian princes, such as the Gaikwad of Baroda. Some even believed that the Gaikwad should be made King of Gujarat.<sup>45</sup> The Gaikwad could only be flattered by such doctrines, and this, above all, was why he tolerated the extremists' presence for so long.

These extremists formed select bands of Marathis and Gujaratis to act as terrorists within Gujarat itself. These groups were modelled on the revolutionary *samitis* of Bengal. K.G. Deshpande formed a nationalist school in 1907, with sixty students, who were mostly in their mid-teens. Small revolutionary groups were organized amongst these students, and revolutionary literature was printed secretly at a press at Mehsana in Kadi District. One of these groups was almost certainly responsible for the attempted assassination of Lord and Lady Minto with two coconut bombs at Ahmedabad in 1909.<sup>46</sup> In March 1911, the British discovered the existence of this group after some seditious literature published at Mehsana fell into their hands. Two leaders of the group were tried, but could not be

proved guilty as a result of perjury committed by witnesses. However, the trials showed that there were many extremist nationalists in the Baroda bureaucracy. The Gaikwad was placed in an extremely embarrassing position, and demands began to be heard in British circles for his abdication. It was at this point that the Gaikwad supposedly snubbed the King-Emperor at the Delhi *darbar* of 1911. The charge was almost certainly baseless, but it gave publicity to the Gaikwad's 'disloyalty', and cries for his abdication became more vociferous. A few days after the *darbar*, the Gaikwad pulled back from the brink by forcing K.G. Deshpande and other extremists to resign from state service, and by confiscating the press at Mehsana which had produced the seditious literature.

Although the Baroda extremists had no mass backing in the state, many important Gujarati nationalists, including Vallabhbhai Patel, learnt their nationalism from them.<sup>47</sup> Under Gandhi's leadership, the nationalist movement in Gujarat took a very different course, but the idea of bands of elite terrorists lingered on in Gujarat, and came to the fore once more during the Quit India movement of 1942.<sup>48</sup> The doctrines of Hindu patriotism were always popular amongst the Marathis of Baroda city, and many subsequently became members of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj. These two movements set up their Gujarati headquarters in Baroda city. After 1917, the nationalist movement in Baroda city was split between the Hindu patriots and the Gandhian nationalists, a division which lasted till 1948. The only major trouble between the two sides occurred in 1939, when there were riots in Baroda city between Marathi and Gujarati nationalist students.

Between 1917 and 1934, Gujarat was in the forefront of the Indian nationalist movement. This was partly because Gandhi's base was in Ahmedabad city during these years, and partly because the Patidars of the British areas of central and south Gujarat were the moving force behind several extremely effective agitations against the British. These agitations were led by Vallabhbhai Patel, who was a Patidar of Kheda District. The militancy of the Patidars was caused by a prolonged agricultural depression which occurred in Gujarat between 1899 and 1935. In the late nineteenth century, many Patidar landowners had been enriched by a long run of good harvests at a time when urban markets were being opened up by the railways. Many Patidar middle peasants had risen into the ranks of the rich peasantry. The agricultural depression provided a grave

setback to their ambitions, and it brought about a demand for a lowering of the land revenue. In 1917, Gandhi, with characteristic political skill, turned this discontent against the British. Between 1917 and 1934, there were a series of peasant agitations in Gujarat supported along class lines by the Patidar middle peasantry. There was also a strong nationalist movement in the cities of Gujarat. This was supported largely by a mercantile class which wished to free itself from the economic discriminations imposed by British imperialism. Another of Gandhi's great achievements was to link this movement in the cities to the movement among the Patidar peasantry.

There were no comparable movements in Baroda state. The merchants and industrialists of Baroda saw the state as their chief ally, and were as a result politically quiescent. But why were there no peasant agitations? The middle peasants of Baroda state suffered from the same agricultural depression as the middle peasants of British Gujarat, and during the period 1917-34, land revenue rates in Baroda state were comparable to those in British Gujarat. Three main reasons can be suggested for the lack of militancy amongst the middle peasants of Baroda. Firstly, the nationalist leaders of the peasants of British Gujarat refused to support agitations in princely states before 1938. The intelligentsia of Baroda city were unable to take their place. Secondly, the Baroda government was extremely sensitive to peasant demands. The landowning peasants of Baroda were content to petition their rulers, rather than go for all out confrontation with the government, as was the case in British Gujarat after 1917. Thirdly, in Baroda state the peasant elites had considerable power in the state bureaucracy. They could act as effective leaders of their communities, unlike in British Gujarat, where the peasant elites had very little say in the administration of the Bombay Presidency. These points can be illustrated by an examination of two peasant agitations, one in British Gujarat, the other in Baroda state.

The first major peasant agitation in British Gujarat was the Kheda no-revenue campaign of 1918. This agitation occurred after the traditional leaders of the Patidar community in Kheda District had lost control over the Patidar middle peasantry to Gandhian political activists. During the nineteenth century, the Patidar community in Kheda had been led by a family of rich Patidar landlords, the Desai family of Nadiad. The power of the Nadiad Desais had

rested on the influence they possessed with the British bureaucracy in Gujarat. As the chief local allies of the British, they had been nominated as presidents of the Nadiad Municipality and the Kheda District Board. After the constitutional reforms of 1909, they lost this position to elected representatives. In 1912, the landowning peasants of Kheda elected two Bombay lawyers, Vithalbhai Patel and Gokaldas Parekh, as their representatives. These two men had far less influence with the British bureaucracy than the Nadiad Desais had had in the past. In 1917, late rains damaged the crops in Kheda District, and many Patidar peasants demanded that the land revenue be suspended for the year. The peasants first approached their traditional leaders, the Nadiad Desais, who told them to see their two elected representatives. Although Patel and Parekh took up the peasants' demand with vigour, they failed to move the bureaucracy to a satisfactory extent. As a result, in early 1918, the Patidar peasantry asked Gandhi to help them. Gandhi responded by launching a full-scale satyagraha in Kheda District.<sup>49</sup>

The second rather less dramatic agitation occurred in Petlad Taluka of Baroda District. Petlad Taluka lay in the fertile Charotar tract, the heartland of the Patidars. The taluka adjoined the areas in which the Gandhian movement amongst the peasants was strongest. In 1923, there was an extremely successful satyagraha in the British parts of the Charotar against a tax levied by the British government. In 1924, some Gandhians who lived in Petlad Taluka tried to launch a similar satyagraha against the Baroda government. The issue was over the land revenue, which had been increased by 12.6 per cent in Petlad Taluka the previous year. The protest was initially started by some landlords from the prominent Patidar village of Dharmaj. A leading Patidar landlord called R.B. Patel was asked to act as the leader of the Patidars. He had retired recently from the Baroda Revenue Department, and still had many contacts within it. He was an extremely rich man, and had purchased the monopoly of liquor shops in Navsari District for Rs 350,000.<sup>50</sup>

This movement soon came to the notice of the Baroda Praja Mandal. The Praja Mandal, or people's association, was started in 1917, and was probably the first such body in an Indian state.<sup>51</sup> It consisted of a clique of Baroda city intellectuals, many of whom were Gujarati Brahmans. From the start, they had tried to extend the movement to the peasantry of the state. In 1918, they formed a



*khedut sabha*, or farmers' association. The Baroda government refused to tolerate such activity, and restrictive orders were passed, which severely curtailed the freedom of speech of the Praja Mandal leaders.<sup>52</sup> The Praja Mandal leaders were powerless in the matter, for they did not have widespread support amongst the peasantry of the state. In 1924, it seemed that an opportunity had arisen for them to act as the champions of the peasantry.

In April 1924, a meeting was held at Dharmaj between the landlords of Dharmaj, the Praja Mandal, represented by Sumant Mehta, and the Gandhian activists of Petlad Taluka, led by Ravjibhai Patel, a Patidar who had been with Gandhi in South Africa, and who now lived in Petlad Taluka. Ravjibhai Patel had managed to get some support from some minor Patidars of the area for a full-scale satyagraha against the Baroda government. At the meeting at Dharmaj, the Patidar landlords of the village told the Gandhians and the Praja Mandalists that they would not support a Gandhian style satyagraha in which all the revenue would be refused. Instead, they would merely ask the farmers to refuse to pay the increase in the revenue. Without the support of these prominent Patidars, the activists had little chance of success. R.B. Patel agreed to head a delegation to put the farmers' case to the Dewan of Baroda, Sir Manubhai Mehta.

Sir Manubhai received the delegation in late April. After hearing the farmers' case, he told them that he could not reduce the revenue. But after they had gone, he gave secret orders that the increase should not be collected. The Charotar revenues were worth too much to Baroda state for Sir Manubhai to risk losing them for the year.<sup>53</sup> As a result, the no-revenue campaign was a very damp squib. The movement was confined largely to Dharmaj and four surrounding villages. Only eight per cent of the population of Petlad Taluka took part.<sup>54</sup> In October 1924, the Baroda government agreed to investigate the matter, and the agitation was called off.<sup>55</sup>

In 1924, there was no effective challenge to the leadership of the Patidar landlords in Petlad Taluka, unlike Kheda in 1918, when the old leaders of the Patidar community, the Nadiad Desais, had lost their position to Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel. During the Petlad movement of 1924, local Congress leaders, such as Ravjibhai Patel tried to persuade Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel to become the leaders of the peasants of Petlad as well. Gandhi had

refused to do this saying: 'It is, I believe, an accepted principle that the Congress should not conduct or advise a satyagraha campaign in Indian States.'<sup>56</sup> This was a bad blow to the nationalists of Petlad Taluka. The leader of the Praja Mandal, Sumant Mehta, was no substitute for Gandhi or Vallabhbhai. He was not steeped in Patidar politics, as was Vallabhbhai, and he certainly never aspired to be a Gandhian saint. He was an urban, not a peasant leader. He was also hampered by the knowledge that the Baroda government would have no qualms about suppressing the Praja Mandal if it proved popular amongst the peasantry.

The events in Petlad Taluka in 1924 also demonstrated that the Patidars of the taluka neither wanted nor needed Gandhian satyagraha. Satyagraha was a weapon for those who lacked influence in society. Its technique was to pick a quarrel, take up a rigid and extreme stand, and then fight the affair out in public. The Patidar landlords of Petlad did not need to use such tactics, for they had good contacts within the Baroda government, and could achieve more behind the scenes. The Baroda government was prepared to listen to them, for it could not afford to alienate this important element in the state. As long as the Patidar landlords had such influence, the Patidar community as a whole was prepared to accept their leadership.

Another aspect of the affair was the different reaction of the Baroda and British governments to peasant protest. The British invariably fell into the Gandhian trap by taking a rigid stand against protest. Being socially isolated, they were obsessed with their prestige. The Baroda officials, on the other hand, were flexible, even devious. The conflict between the Patidar landlords of Dharmaj and the Baroda government was a subtle war of nerves, largely carried out behind the scenes.

After 1924, the Praja Mandal retreated into its shell, holding 'annual' conferences which were often several years apart, at which demands for constitutional reform in the state and a reduction in the land revenue were passed ritually. It was only in the years after 1930 that the Praja Mandal began to gather wider support from young Patidars, Brahmans and Vantias who had been inspired by the civil disobedience movement in British India. Their elders still supported the regime for the economic benefits it brought them, and they continued to have an almost worshipful reverence for Sayajirao. The sons accepted the great reforms of the late nineteenth

century as commonplace facts of life, and were more critical about the lack of democracy in the state. They realized that Congress was the political power of the future. Their heroes were Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel, not Sayajirao, by this time a tired old man who spent his days in European health resorts.

The rising militancy of the young coincided with the change in Congress policy towards princely states in 1938. At the Haripura Congress of 1938, Congress resolved for the first time to support, to a certain extent, agitations in princely states. Since 1934, Vallabhbhai Patel had been building up contacts in the Baroda Praja Mandal. His chief lieutenant was Maganbhai Patel, a Patidar building contractor of Baroda city who had been elected president of the Baroda District Local Board in 1929. Maganbhai Patel took part in the civil disobedience movement and was jailed by the British. Under Maganbhai Patel the Praja Mandal became a more Patidar-dominated body with a better chance of linking up with the peasantry of the state. In 1936, the Praja Mandal began to demand that the land revenue be reduced by 35 per cent throughout the state. The Baroda government retaliated by forbidding Praja Mandal members to speak outside Baroda city.<sup>57</sup> After the Haripura Congress, Vallabhbhai Patel decided to take the issue up himself. He had himself elected president of the Praja Mandal, and in a speech at the annual session of 1938 attacked the Baroda government outspokenly, saying that if the revenue was not reduced, he would personally lead a satyagraha against the Baroda government.<sup>58</sup> He promised to bring in large numbers of Congress volunteers from British Gujarat to help.<sup>59</sup>

The Dewan, V.T. Krishnamachariar, was extremely worried by these threats, for he realized that a serious conflict between the Baroda government and the Patidar hero, Vallabhbhai Patel, could alienate Patidars throughout the state. In November 1938, Vallabhbhai decided to wait until the Rajkot satyagraha was over before launching a satyagraha in Baroda. In the meantime, Praja Mandal workers were sent out into the villages to build up contacts with the peasants and investigate their complaints. While this was going on, V.T. Krishnamachariar reviewed the revenue structure of the state. On 26 December, he announced that land revenue would be reduced by about Rs 2 million throughout the state, and that the Legislative Assembly would be enlarged and made more representative.<sup>60</sup> This was a bad blow to Vallabhbhai's plans. A

further blow followed with the failure of the Rajkot satyagraha in early 1939. Vallabhbhai decided to abandon his plans for the satyagraha in Baroda state. Once again confrontation had been avoided in Baroda, and the alliance between the Gaikwad and landowning peasantry had been saved, although not for long.

Before 1948, there were no more serious attempts at agitation in Baroda state. In 1939, Sayajirao died, and was succeeded by his incompetent but likeable grandson, Pratapsinhrao. As V.T. Krishnamachariar continued as Dewan till 1944, there was no change in state policy. During the Quit India movement of 1942, the students of Baroda city and some country areas indulged in some riotous demonstrations, and some even joined terrorist gangs. The Praja Mandal leaders themselves were split between those who merely wanted to protest against the British, and those who wanted to use the movement as a means of attacking the Baroda government. The capitalists of the state closed their factories in protest at British atrocities initially, but opened up after a few days, so as not to lose the chance of making high profits during the war period.

In 1947, there was little enthusiasm in Baroda over the integration of the Indian states into the new independent India. The only demonstration of any note in the state between 1947 and 1949 was one against the Hindu Mahasabha after Gandhi's assassination. The negotiations between the Praja Mandal leaders and the Gaikwadi government over the transfer of power were conducted in a remarkably low key. The Gaikwad refused to appoint a popular prime minister for a long time, but had to give in after threats from Vallabhbhai Patel's States Ministry. A popular government was established in Baroda in May 1948, and on 31 January 1949, Baroda state was merged into the new Bombay state.

In Baroda, few rejoiced at the news of the merger. Rather there was a feeling of depression and sorrow throughout the state.<sup>61</sup> A distinctive and successful political entity had been swept away not because it had failed, or become riddled with anachronisms, but because of events outside its borders. The sorrow was not mere nostalgia. The landowning peasants and the new captains of industry had good cause to mourn the passing of a regime which had brought them much material benefit.



## NOTES

1. The caste was known originally as 'Kanbi', but in the late nineteenth century the name changed to 'Patidar'. Therefore, in deference to historical convention, the caste will be referred to as 'Kanbi' when describing events before 1875, 'Patidar' afterwards. The caste was the largest single one in Baroda state, making up 18 per cent of the population in 1881 and 20 per cent of the population in 1921. *Report on the Census of the Baroda Territories 1881*, Bombay, 1883, p. 50. *Census of India 1921*, XVII, *Baroda State*, Pt 2, Bombay, 1921, p. 59.
2. *Baroda Administration Report*, 1904-5, [hereafter *Baroda AR*] p. 117.
3. The description of the society of rural Baroda which follows can only be considered a rough guide. The list of classes should be seen as a list of ideal types. There were several areas in the state in which the class structure differed considerably, as in the hilly tracts, in which there were many tribal people; in Kathiawar, where there were many landlords; and in parts of Navsari District, where there was a pronounced divide between the rich peasants and their serfs. The percentages are likewise very rough. They are based on a number of sources, especially: *Census of India 1921*, XVII, *Baroda State*, Pt 2, pp. 78-91, (figures for Baroda and Kadi Districts only). *Mulki Sambhandi Pragane Petlad Vasti Patra* Badal, Baroda Records Office, Revenue Department, General Daftar No. 1400, Ferist 11, Bundle 3.
4. These descriptions are the ones used by Hamza Alavi in 'Peasants and Revolution', in Kathleen Gough and Hari Sharma, eds., *Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia*, New York, 1973, pp. 292-5. It should be noted that the predominant mode of agricultural production in the rural areas of Baroda, in other words what Alavi would call the predominant 'sector', was that of rich-cum-middle peasants and agricultural labourers.
5. G.H. Desai and A.B. Clarke, *Gazetteer of the Baroda State*, I, Bombay, 1923, p. 565 [hereafter *Baroda Gazetteer*].
6. The system is described in *Baroda Gazetteer*, I, pp. 325-8; II, pp. 403-33.
7. *Ibid.*, I, p. 564.
8. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 552-4.
9. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 4-5.
10. An example was in 1868, after the revenue in Petlad Taluka had been raised by 12.5 per cent. About 500 leading Kanbis came to Baroda city to protest. Their leader was seized by order of the Gaikwad and tied to a wooden frame. He was beaten between his legs until he agreed to pay the increased rate. The other peasants were so intimidated that they agreed to pay. This, and numerous other cases of torture, came to light in statements made by peasants to the Baroda Commission of 1873. IOL, R/2/339/486/68.
11. Flight was a traditional reaction by peasants to excessive taxation. An example serves to show the nature of their plight. In Borsad Taluka of British Kheda District, the land revenue ranged from about Rs 1½ to Rs 4 per *bigha*. In the adjoining comparable area of Petlad Taluka of Baroda state, the revenue ranged from Rs 10 to Rs 30 per *bigha*. IOL, R/2/339/486/68.

12. *Report of the Commission to inquire into the Administration of the Baroda State*, London, 1875, pp. 63-5.
13. The ignorance of preceding Gaikwads can be judged from the fact that Ganpat-rao Gaikwad, who ruled from 1847 to 1856, thought that the capital of Britain was somewhere south of Calcutta. *Baroda Gazetteer*, I, p. 580.
14. IOL, R/1/19/162.
15. *Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department*, No. CXXXII, *Report on the Administration of the Baroda State for 1875-76*, Calcutta, 1876, p. 49. This was similar to his reforms in Travancore earlier. See Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, London, 1976, pp. 88-90.
16. *Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department*, No. CXLV, *Report on the Administration of the Baroda State for 1876-77*, Calcutta, 1878, p. 101.
17. *Baroda AR*, 1924-5, p. 93. *Baroda AR*, 1934-5, p. 84. In 1934-5, Bombay Presidency got 39 per cent of its revenue from land revenue, U.P. got 52 per cent. Of the major provinces, only Bengal (31 per cent) and the Punjab (25 per cent) had lower figures than Baroda. M.H. Shah, *Baroda by Decades 1871-1941*, Baroda, 1942, p. 43.
18. *Baroda AR*, 1944-5, pp. 58-9.
19. *Baroda AR*, 1876-7, p. 101, and 1884-5, p. 146.
20. The term is used in a very rough sense to denote a system of bureaucracy. For patrimonialism, see Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, ed. Talcott Parsons, New York, 1964, pp. 346-58.
21. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Moscow, 1972, p. 110.
22. The only serious incident caused by the revenue settlements was at Pilvai in Kadi District in 1898, when some Rajputs refused to allow the revenue surveyors access to their fields, which led to a battle with the Baroda army. *Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department*, No. CCCLXVII, *Report on the Political Administration of the Baroda State for 1898-9*, Simla, 1899, pp. 10-11. About 90 per cent of the villages in the state received a ryotwari style settlement. About 7 per cent were held as talukdari style tenures, and about 3 per cent received other types of settlement. *Baroda Gazetteer*, II, pp. 83, 484-763.
23. Mysore and Travancore were the only other states with legislative councils which could be compared in any way with the legislative councils of British India of the pre-1935 period. R.L. Handa, *History of the Freedom Struggle in Princely States*, Delhi, 1968, p. 61.
24. See James Manor, 'Political Change in an Indian State, Mysore 1910-1955', D.Phil. thesis, University of Sussex, 1975, pp. 15-17.
25. *Baroda AR*, 1876-7, p. 101, and 1934-5, p. 85.
26. *Baroda AR*, 1884-5, p. 146, and 1944-5, pp. 60-1.
27. *Selections from the Educational Records of the Government of India*, I, *Educational Reports 1859-71*, Delhi, 1960, p. 572.
28. *Baroda Gazetteer*, II, p. 316. Madhava Rao had carried out similar educational innovations in Travancore. Jeffrey, *Nayar Dominance*, pp. 75-83.
29. In 1941, the literacy rates by caste in Baroda state were as follows (figures are for both sexes aged seven and over):

Vanias	68%	Rajputs	27%
Brahmans	62%	Baraiyas (a low	
Patidars	41%	agricultural caste)	25%
Muslims	33%	Tribals	10%

State average 33%

*Census of India 1941, XVII, Baroda, Baroda, 1941, pp. 105-6.*

30. *Baroda AR, 1944-5, p. 181.*

31. The 1941 census could not be used because the figures for Bombay Presidency only represented a sample of every fiftieth form completed. This was unfortunate, because the 1931 literacy figures for Bombay Presidency were almost certainly too low due to abstentions from the census by large numbers of educated people during the civil disobedience movement. Detailed figures for 1891 and 1931 were as follows:

	1891	1931
<i>Cities</i>		
Bombay	24%	24%
Baroda	21%	41%
<i>Large Areas</i>		
Bombay Presidency	8%	9%
British Gujarat	10%	13%
Kathiawar States	8%	10%
Mahi Kantha Agency	4%	6%
Baroda State	8%	21%
<i>Comparative Local Areas</i>		
(a) Central Gujarat		
Baroda District	8%	24%
Kheda District	8%	12%
Cambay State	10%	14%
(b) South Gujarat		
Navsari District (Baroda)	9%	20%
Surat District (British)	13%	17%

Figures from relevant censuses for Bombay Presidency, Baroda state and Western India States Agency for 1891 and 1931.

32. Origins of top civil servants in Baroda state were as follows (by percentage):

	1875-6	1921
Marathis	64	14
Gujarati Hindus	24	67
Parsis	7	2
Muslims	2	14
Europeans	2	3
Others	1	0
	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 100

1875-6 figures were for the 119 best paid Baroda civil servants. *Baroda AR, 1875-6, p. 5.* 1921 figures were for gazetted Baroda civil servants. *Census of India 1921, XVII. Baroda, Pt. 2, pp. 114-21.*

33. Note by Sir Oliver St John, 28 September 1888, IOL, R/1/22/16.

34. *Baroda AR, 1875-6, pp. 37-40.*

35. *Baroda AR*, 1934-5, p. 84.
36. *Baroda AR*, 1915-16, p. 79. References will not be given for all of the figures in the rest of this section, as they come from annual administration reports already referred to.
37. *Report of the Committee on the Economic Development of the Baroda State*, Bombay, 1920, p. 180.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
39. M.H. Shah, *Baroda by Decades*, p. 143.
40. *Baroda AR*, 1944-5, p. 27.
41. *Loc. cit.*
42. *Loc. cit.*
43. After certain judicial reforms in 1904, there was a greater separation of power between the executive and judiciary in Baroda than in British India. Two of the notable chief justices of Baroda were Abbas Tyabji and Ambalal Desai. Both became prominent Gujarati Congressmen after their retirements.
44. Unpublished essay for *Bande Mataram*, 1908, in Sri Aurobindo, *Early Political Writings*, Pondicherry, 1972, p. 905.
45. Punjabhai Bhatt, *The Solution of the Political Problem in India*, Ahmedabad, 1903, p. 6.
46. The British never found the culprits. NAI, H. Poll, January 1910, 143-53. My information came from interviews with descendants of those who took part in the revolutionary movement.
47. One of Vallabhbhai Patel's friends in the first decade of the twentieth century was Narsinhbhai Patel, a prominent Baroda extremist.
48. The leaders of the bands of terrorists in Gujarat in 1942-3 were in most cases Gujarati followers of Aurobindo Ghose, who then lived in Pondicherry. There was a direct lineal descent from the terrorist bands of 1905-11 to the terrorist bands of 1942.
49. These events are dealt with in greater detail in David Hardiman, 'Peasant Agitations in Kheda District, Gujarat. 1917-1934'. D. Phil. thesis, University of Sussex, 1975, pp. 123-37.
50. R.M. Patel, *Jivanna Jharna*, I, Ahmedabad, 1959, p. 287.
51. Handa, *Freedom Struggle in Princely States*, p. 89.
52. *Bombay Chronicle*, 7 June 1921, p. 4.
53. R.M. Patel, *Jivanna Jharna*, I, p. 263.
54. S.V. Mukerjee, *Suba* of Baroda District, to Gaikwad, 13 August 1924, Baroda Records Office, Miscellaneous Confidential File No. XIII, No. 9.
55. Mukerjee to Gaikwad, 10 October 1924, *ibid.*
56. The source does not specify that this was a response to the Petlad agitation, but the timing of the remark suggests that it almost certainly was, *Navajivan*, 20 April 1924, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, xxiii, Delhi, 1967, p. 471.
57. *Baroda Fortnightly Report*, first half of July 1936.
58. Narhari Parikh, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, II*, Ahmedabad, 1956, pp. 369-71.
59. Krishnamachariar to Baroda Resident, 15 November 1938, IOL R/1/29/1815.
60. *Baroda Fortnightly Report*, first half of December 1938.
61. *Times of India*, 2 February 1949, p. 7.



# TRAVANCORE

## Status, Class and the Growth of Radical Politics, 1860-1940

# 4

### The Temple-Entry Movement

ROBIN JEFFREY

#### I

The establishment of a vigorous Communist Party in the area called Kerala on India's southwestern coast in the 1940s and 1950s grew out of earlier movements for basic civil rights. As a rigid and debasing system of caste collapsed and small-scale capitalism grew, a middle class arose among the so-called low castes in Travancore, the princely state which comprised the southern half of Kerala. To establish their respectable place in Hindu society, these low-caste middle-class men struggled to attain the rights of caste-Hindus, ultimately the right to enter and worship in temples. To lend numbers to the public meetings and marches that were part of these campaigns, middle-class leaders sought to involve their less prosperous, less educated relatives and castemen, and thereby carried to them new ideas of equality and new perceptions of politics. By 1936, the small middle class among low castes had achieved many of its goals. Its poorer castemen, however, seemed as far as ever from the material comfort which many now believed was the right of all men. Radicalized by the campaigns of the previous 30 years, growing numbers began to reject the attempts of their middle-class castemen to use them as cannon fodder in communal pressure groups. In this way, thousands of poor low-caste men began to turn to the Communist Party.

The demand of low castes for the right to enter temples in Travancore symbolized the dramatic changes that occurred in a 'modernizing', progressive princely state. From the 1860s, Travancore's rulers strove successfully for the technical attributes of modernity—schools, roads, export crops, law courts, medical

services, efficient bureaucracy. They did not intend, however, that these innovations should alter the nature of orthodox Hinduism, of which they were the custodians, the representatives on earth of the presiding deity in the state's chief temple.

But it was impossible to let only the genie of physical modernization out of the bottle. Once the cork was pulled, all the genies escaped together, in spite of the best efforts to keep some stopped up inside. By the 1890s, Travancore had developed a significant elite educated in the western style; by the end of the First World War, it had a clearly identifiable middle class and a growing working class. These new social groups, however, did not always correspond to the divisions of the old social hierarchy, in which caste-Hindus had held most of the land and the economic and political power that went with it. There were now growing numbers of educated, well-to-do low-caste men, while Syrian Christians provided probably more educated, wealthy men than any other group. Yet an ideology, which gave certain rights and privileges to caste-Hindus by virtue of their birth, remained in force, though the economic conditions that had given rise to it were fast disappearing. This was a contradiction fraught with conflict.

The newly educated and newly prosperous among low castes smarted at the disabilities that a theocratic Hindu state enforced against them. The focus for so many low-caste aspirations was the right to enter temples and thereby be accepted as respectable members of the Hindu community. In Travancore, there was an added significance to temple-entry: it was a right that was within the gift of a Hindu Maharaja, the earthly trustee of the deity, as it could never be within that of a British government. To attempt to move the Maharaja to grant such a right made political sense; to have attempted to move a governor in British India to do the same thing clearly would have been foolishness. The traditional power of the Maharaja to arbitrate and decree in social matters was clearly recognized, as the following remarks of a distinguished Tamil Brahmin in 1925 indicate:

My Hindu friends, whatever their personal conviction be, where it is a matter of a mandate from their Sovereign, will not dare to question the propriety of it; they will bow loyally to it, in the same way as my Christian friends recognize the Sovereignty of their religious head. The Hindu Church in Travancore will do in exactly the same way as a Catholic may submit to a mandate from the Pope in Rome. . . .<sup>1</sup>

This authority of the Maharaja greatly affected the response of the new low-caste middle class to the anomalies of their position in society. The right to enter temples became a crucial symbol, one which attracted both poor and prosperous, literate and illiterate, low-caste men.

In discussing society in Travancore in the twentieth century, one encounters a problem of social categories. Literacy in Travancore was higher than in any other state or province in India. Male literacy in 1931 was 41 per cent and in 1941, 68 per cent. In 1931, more than 70,000 Travancoreans were literate in English out of a population of five million. Most of these 70,000 could probably be categorized as 'middle class' in that at least part of their livelihood came from government service, teaching, law, commerce or clerical work. However, there were cash-crop farmers, merchants and small bankers who were not literate in English but who would fall into a 'middle class' category. Moreover, of the more than two million Travancoreans who were literate in 1931, large numbers were small landholders, tenants, landless labourers or factory workers. To be literate did not mean to be 'middle class'. Among Iravas, male literacy was 43 per cent in 1931, though Iravas were low caste and mainly poor labourers and tenants.<sup>2</sup>

I have tried to deal with this problem of useful categories by generally referring in the pre-1920 period to an 'educated elite', which can be measured through the English-literacy statistics in the censuses. I begin to use the more general expression 'middle class' only from the 1920s when the admittedly unsatisfactory economic data permits some tentative statements about class formation, and when Travancore politicians and labour leaders begin to use the rhetoric of class consciousness.

## II

Travancore covered an area of 7,600 square miles, was entitled to a salute of 19 guns from the paramount power, and among the princely states was exceeded in population only by Hyderabad and Mysore. It was the most literate state or province in India and one of the most densely populated areas in the world, with 792 people to the square mile in 1941. Its population grew from 2,952,000 in 1901 to 6,070,000 in 1941, an increase of 106 per cent. The all-India population increased by 32 per cent in the same period.<sup>3</sup>

The rulers of Travancore were recognized as the custodians and

arbiters of Hinduism within the state. In 1749, the conquering Maharaja Martanda Varma dedicated the state to Padmanabha, the presiding deity of the great temple in Trivandrum. The rulers of Travancore took the title, Padmanabha Dasa (servant of Padmanabha), represented themselves as the deity's earthly trustee and took part in a number of ceremonies symbolizing this connection. Much money and effort were spent to keep Brahmins comfortable and happy.<sup>4</sup> The state, one of its Maharajas wrote, was 'perhaps the most priest-ridden...in the whole of India...the ruler himself is not his own master in religious matters'.<sup>5</sup> The relationship between religion and the state was drawn tighter in 1812 when the British Dewan of a young Maharani brought 350 important, mis-managed temples and their properties under the direct control of the government. This number eventually rose to about 1,300, and most of the major temples were under government control by 1875. By the 1930s the temples and their attached feeding houses and charities, from which Brahmins and, to a lesser extent, other caste-Hindus, were the sole beneficiaries, involved an expenditure of about Rs 20 lakhs annually.<sup>7</sup> Only caste-Hindus were permitted to enter these temples to worship; indeed, *avarna*, or low-caste, Hindus were prohibited even from passing close to the temple walls, though Christians and Muslims were allowed to do so.

Two features of traditional society had struck European visitors since the sixteenth century. The first was the matrilineal system of family and inheritance followed by most caste-Hindus, particularly the Nayars, who formed the warrior-gentry. The second feature was the rigidity, refinement and ruthlessness of the system of caste. Men polluted their caste superiors not merely on touch but on sight. In the extreme case, a Pulaya was said to pollute a Nambudiri Brahmin from ninety-six paces. 'When [the Nayars] walk along a street or road,' wrote Duarte Barbosa in 1516.

they shout to the low caste folk to get out of their way; this they do, and if one will not, the Nayre may kill him without punishment; even if he is a youth of good [i.e., high-caste] family but poor and worthless, and he finds in his way a man of low caste who is rich and respected and in favour with the King, yet he makes him clear the way for him as if he were a King.<sup>8</sup>

The British imposed a political Resident on Travancore in 1800. In the next sixty years, little attempt was made to tamper with the state's society or local politics, but from the 1860s, powerful forces



came increasingly to bear on the lives of Travancoreans. Travancore had fallen into grave disfavour with British governments in the 1850s for its careless, corrupt and cruel administration. In 1860 a young and well-educated Maharaja came to the throne. His minister was his former tutor, a brilliant product of the formal English education offered in the Madras High School from the 1840s. British pressure to reform the administration complemented the enthusiasm of the Maharaja and his minister to be seen as innovators and modernizers. The administration was increasingly centralized, examinations were introduced for government servants, commercial monopolies abolished, sweeping land reforms promulgated conferring ownership rights on thousands of government tenants, and a wide network of schools established. By the mid-1870s there were a thousand miles of roads where in the 1850s there had been no roads at all. European missionaries, more numerous in Travancore than in any comparable area of India, intensified their educational and proselytizing work among *avarna* (low-caste) Hindus. In the hills, European planters opened estates; in the port towns of Quilon and Alleppey, merchants, both European and Indian began to export Travancore crops.<sup>9</sup>

The Travancore government emphasized its modernity and efficiency in 1875 when it carried out the state's first 'scientific' census on the lines of the British Indian census of 1871. The census put the population at 2,311,000 — 74 per cent Hindu, 20 per cent Christian and 6 per cent Muslim. Of the total population, about 40 per cent were *avarna* Hindus, and about a quarter *savarna* (high caste). This in itself was a surprise to those who had studied the earlier attempts at censuses in 1816, 1836 and 1854, all of which had put the *savarna* population well in excess of the *avarna*. The very act of counting the *avarna* population was an admission that it had some importance, though the Tamil Brahmin who wrote the 1875 report dismissed *avarna* Hindus with the remark that they were 'not distinguished by any peculiarities worth mention'.<sup>10</sup> He might have mentioned, however, the disabilities that still worked against those Hindus who were classified as *avarna* by their neighbours. They were banned from using many roads and public buildings, banned from most government schools, and banned from approaching—much less, entering—temples.<sup>11</sup>

The 1875 census discovered 420 'sub-divisions of Hindu castes', but the report listed only 75 'more general sub-divisions'. The

largest group of caste-Hindus, 19 per cent of the total population, were the Nayars, or 'Malayali Sudras', as the Brahmin census-taker chose to call them to keep them in their proper place in the four-varna hierarchy. Nayars were further divided into 35 subcastes, considered to be ordered hierarchically, though often linked through hypergamous marriage liaisons.<sup>12</sup> Among the *avarna* Hindus, the largest section was that of the Iravas, 16.5 per cent of the total population. Iravas, though regarded as polluting by caste-Hindus, enjoyed superior status to the appallingly abused ex-slave castes, who totalled about 12 per cent of the population. An Irava was said to pollute a Nambudiri Brahmin from thirty-two feet and a Nayar from twelve, and considered himself polluted by the approach of one of the ex-slave castes. Iravas too were divided into subcastes, but the census-takers, being caste-Hindus, did not trouble to record or discuss them. Although there were a few affluent landholding families of Iravas in central Travancore, the overwhelming majority were engaged in labouring occupations: weaving, farming as tenants or subtenants, and caring for the coconut plam, the task with which they were traditionally associated. A few other prosperous families were noted for their ayurvedic physicians. It was Iravas who were to lead the challenge to the disabilities which old Travancore society enforced against *avarna* Hindus.<sup>13</sup>

The Travancore census of 1875 undoubtedly caught a truer picture of social reality than many other Indian censuses.<sup>14</sup> Local men conducted it; a Brahmin graduate of the Trivandrum college wrote the report. Such men, concerned as they were with their own status, had an interest in seeing that the social nuances governing their lives were correctly presented.

In enumerating castes on a statewide basis and publishing the findings, the 1875 and subsequent censuses were helping to alter concepts of caste. Caste, especially in Travancore, was essentially a local matter in former times. The higher one's caste, the greater one's mobility and awareness of the wider world. A Brahmin could move freely throughout the petty chiefdoms of the old Kerala region and would have had a clear idea of the four *varna*-categories of classical Hinduism. But a low-caste man—an Irava, for example—was bound to his locality. He knew with which families he could marry, which people he could approach, and which he might eat with; but his awareness of other Iravas, even thirty miles away, was

likely to have been scant. Even from a distance, his dress—a cloth hanging no lower than the knees and no covering above the waist—warned his caste-Hindu neighbours of his lowly status. If he did not show the required subservience, he was beaten. To run away to another locality offered no prospect for improvement, for how would a man live without his traditional landlords and patrons? And in a land without roads and bridges, how far could a man run?<sup>15</sup>

From the 1860s, however, growing numbers of Iravas and ex-slave castes came in touch with European missionaries, from whose schools they were able to get a basic education. Many of the ex-slave castes converted to Christianity, but the large majority of Iravas held back from this decisive step.<sup>16</sup> Pressure from British governments, European officials in Travancore service, and western-educated Travancoreans eventually brought admission of Iravas in growing numbers to government schools. From the 1870s, Iravas began to graduate from the Trivandrum college. The 1875 census put male literacy among Iravas at 3.15 per cent; by the 1891 census it had risen to 12.10 per cent, and 30 Iravas were literate in English.<sup>17</sup> (See Table 1.) At the same time, communications developed rapidly. It became easier for a low-caste man to escape to towns like Alleppey or Quilon, where the expansion of the coir and copra industries was beginning to bring cash to Irava families.

TABLE 1

*Male literacy in Travancore (per cent), 1875–1941*

	1875	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941
Brahmins	50.2	51.7	69.8	62.8	72.0	81.2	83.5
Nayars	21.3	37.0	30.6	46.1	61.2	61.8	73.4
Christians	12.4	21.3	28.4	29.8	43.5	46.0	73.8
Iravas	3.2	12.1	10.5	18.6	36.4	42.7	61.0
All Males	11.1	19.1	21.5	25.0	38.0	40.8	68.1

*Source: Travancore Census Reports*

The fall in some percentages (e.g. Brahmins between 1901 and 1911) is to be explained in the change in census criteria and in the vagaries of particular censuses. The overall trend, however, is clear.

As the number of men educated in English increased, so did the study of the census reports. In Travancore they began to reveal what caste-Hindus regarded as an alarming rate of conversion to Christianity. In 1875, 20 per cent of the population had been Christian;

by 1901, it was 24 per cent; by 1931, 31 per cent; by 1941, 32 per cent. In the same period, the proportion of Pulayas, the largest of the ex-slave castes and nominally Hindus, fell from 8.18 per cent, to 6.99 per cent, to 4.07 per cent, to 3.92 per cent.<sup>18</sup> The decennial censuses developed into a battleground on which men might attempt to elevate their status or prove the popular superiority of their religion.<sup>19</sup> However, even in 1931 there was still no electoral danger to the administrative dominance of caste-Hindus in Travancore. The legislature had little power, and the franchise was still narrow enough to ensure that those converting to Christianity did not have the vote anyway. It was, however, the implicit reflection on their faith that troubled caste-Hindus, as well as the reduction of their rhetorical constituency. All this, moreover, augured trouble if a system of one-man, one-vote, now being advocated by the Indian National Congress, ever came to pass in Travancore.

### III

By the end of the nineteenth century, there had begun to emerge among caste-Hindus, Christians and even *avarna* Hindus, especially Iravas, a significant western-educated elite. It was by no means purely urban. Indeed, in Travancore there was not a single city; but there were twenty small towns, each with a munsiff's (civil) court, taluk offices, schools and bazaars. By the 1930s the government alone employed 25,000 people. Members of the elite usually came from landholding families which were being drawn into a cash economy primarily by the rising price of the products of the coconut palm. Children took their first education in village schools, which government had helped to finance from the 1870s; they studied up to high school matriculation in the small towns; and they could take Arts and Law degrees in Trivandrum and Madras, and Arts degrees in Cochin and Trichinopoly. Then the government service, the wide network of grant-in-aid schools, or the law courts lay before them. They maintained close touch with their relatives in the countryside, and, indeed, as buses came increasingly into use from 1910, were able to live in their family home and still pursue a profession in a nearby town.<sup>20</sup> Getting an education and a middleclass job in Travancore did not involve the break with one's relatives and locality that it often did in Bengal, where the young man was sucked into the vortex of Calcutta.<sup>21</sup> In Travancore, the ideas and interests of the towns soon became those of the countryside.



In the 1880s, when the first formally educated Iravas began to come out of government and mission schools, most jobs under government were closed to them. The government service was the preserve of caste-Hindus. The alternative for the well-educated was to leave the state, and this was the course followed by the first two Irava graduates in Travancore. Others, less educated, were pushed towards trade and commerce, an area which Malayali caste-Hindus tended to avoid. By 1900, the export value of the products of the coconut palm, caring for which was the traditional occupation of Iravas, exceeded Rs 80 lakhs a year.<sup>22</sup> The labour for the industry was overwhelmingly Irava, and growing numbers of Iravas were also becoming middlemen and petty factory owners. Weaving was another traditional occupation that lent itself to small-scale capitalism, and provided a source of wealth to previously poor families.<sup>23</sup>

The decade from 1911 to 1921 was a crucial one, both in terms of education and economic expansion. The increase in the number of people literate in English was one indication.<sup>24</sup> (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2

*English literates in Travancore*

	1911	1921	1931
All Brahmins	3,007	4,221	8,226
Nayars	5,446	14,169	18,606
All Christians	10,129	24,059	37,296
Muslims	299	1,159	1,608
Iravas	1,441	4,529	5,201
	20,322	48,137	70,937

Source: Censuses

Literacy in Malayalam among males over five years of age went from 29 per cent to 38 per cent; among Irava males, it went from 19 per cent to 36 per cent.<sup>25</sup> (See Table 1.) The government expenditure on education, which was Rs 8 lakhs in 1911, rose to Rs 25.8 lakhs by 1920. In 1917 there were 364,000 students in Travancore, about 10 per cent of the total population.<sup>26</sup>

There were also indications of a burgeoning middle class, composed not merely of bureaucrats and professionals but also of small-scale capitalists. Between 1911 and 1921, the population

grew by 15 per cent, but the number of people supported by the 'professions and liberal arts' increased by 46 per cent, and those supported by trade, by 24 per cent. (See Tables 3 and 4.) A sizeable proportion of these were Iravas.

TABLE 3

*Population supported by various occupations,  
1911 and 1921*

<i>Supported by</i>	<i>1911</i>	<i>% of total population</i>	<i>1921</i>	<i>% of total population</i>	<i>% of increase</i>
Trade	285,333	8.3	333,314	8.5	24
Professions and liberal arts					
(a) Law	8,543	0.2	11,575	0.3	36
(b) Medical	10,209	0.3	25,728	0.7	152
(c) Instruction	26,365	0.8	35,779	0.9	34
(d) Letters, arts and science	18,896	0.6	24,113	0.6	28

*Source: Censuses*

Nearly three times as many Iravas as Nayars were returned as 'traders', and even in the category 'lawyers, doctors and teachers', there were more than 2,300 Iravas. (See Table 4.) The economic condition and educational attainments of these men were irreconcilable with the social disabilities that orthodox sections of society still sought to enforce against them.

TABLE 4

*Nayars and Iravas by various occupations, 1921*

	<i>Nayars</i>	<i>Iravas</i>
Traders	15,449	42,438
Lawyers, doctors, teachers	10,568	2,326
Public administration	5,172	346
Artisans and other workers	13,966	77,456

*Source: Census, 1921*

The vigorous economic expansion of the war decade manifested itself in other ways. Of the limited companies that survived the depression in the 1930s, 57 were founded in the 1911–21 period; only three predated it.<sup>27</sup> In spite of the war and the loss of some European markets, the coconut-products industries continued to expand. In 1914, exports of manufactured coir mats and matting were valued at Rs 8.2 lakhs; they were worth Rs 24.5 lakhs by 1921. Rubber exports were worth Rs 78 lakhs annually by 1919. The average annual value of all exports rose from Rs 242 lakhs in the decade 1901–11 to Rs 484 lakhs in the 1911–21 period. The government excise revenue went from Rs 27 lakhs in 1910 to Rs 38 lakhs in 1920, an important development for Iravas, many of whom were involved in the liquor trade.<sup>28</sup>

Christians, especially the ancient Syrian Christians, provided the largest numbers for this growing middle class. Christianity had come to Kerala at some time between the first and fourth centuries after Christ. Syrian Christians had always enjoyed possession of land and respect from caste-Hindus. When the East India Company established itself as the paramount power in India, Syrian Christians found that their religion gave them a handy introduction to the new ruling race. Moreover, the organization of the Christian churches—with priests acting as the focus for parishes and influential bishops presiding over wide geographical areas—gave Christians advantages in the new and profitable pursuits that came with the British.<sup>29</sup> In 1921 half the English literates were Christians, and of the fifty small banks operating in Travancore, eleven were in the Syrian Christian centre of Tiruvalla alone; not one was based in Trivandrum, the state capital.<sup>30</sup> From 1900 Syrian Christians had turned to rubber planting, and in the 1920s to the finance and export of the cashewnut.<sup>31</sup>

Where a middle class was emerging, there had also to be the beginnings of a working class. By 1921 there were 54 factories, each employing more than 20 people; about 8,300 people worked in such establishments. Moreover, 720,800 people were returned as being supported by various factory and cottage industries. The majority of these were low-caste folk. For example, 77,500 Irava 'artisans and other workers' were returned and only 14,000 Nayars.<sup>32</sup>

The English-educated among the middle class tended to retain their caste or religious identity. Government discrimination rein-

forced such distinctions. Although the English-educated of various castes mixed freely for business and on formal social occasions in the towns, they looked to their castemen and co-religionists as their natural associates and allies in other matters. The spate of medal presentations to young graduates, which began about 1910, nicely illustrates the growing assertiveness of the educated elites, and their tendency to see themselves as the natural leaders of their caste or religious group. The first such presentation was in 1906 to an Anglican Syrian Christian girl who had passed the First Arts examination. When she completed her BA in 1909—probably the first Malayali woman to do a BA—there was a meeting of most of the leading clerics and citizens of the various Syrian Christian denominations to present her with a gold medal. Over the next 10 years there were similar presentations to congratulate the first Nayar woman elected a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Nayar women graduates, the first Irava woman graduate, the first Irava woman apothecary, the first London Missionary Society woman graduate, the first Muslim graduate, the first Nambudiri Brahmin MA, the first Syrian Christian to take a first at Oxford, and the first Syrian Christian to get a King's Commission in the army.<sup>33</sup> The war also provided new opportunities for Travancoreans to go abroad and experience western middle-class life at first hand. An Irava doctor, for example, held the rank of captain in the war-time army and moved from there into the Indian Medical Service.<sup>34</sup>

Implicit in all this was a game of one-up-manship among the elites of various communities. This took a more acute form—because there was a good deal at stake—over the question of representation in the legislature and government service. Late in 1918 Syrian Christians of various sects—but primarily Jacobites and Mar Thomites—formed the League for Equal Civic Rights to agitate for the opening of all branches of the government service to Christians, Muslims and *avarna* Hindus, and the ending of untouchability. Turning to the census reports, the leaders—newspaper proprietors, merchants, landlords, lawyers and planters—claimed to speak for 26 lakhs of civilly disabled Travancoreans. It was, they said, a simple matter of greed: caste-Hindus were seeking to keep for themselves the positions of power in the government. To charges that they represented no one but themselves, or, at most, the educated Syrian Christian population, the leaders of the League replied disarmingly:



So long as the League speaks in behalf of [Muslims, *avarna* Hindus and non-Syrian Christians] and advocates their cause . . . , so long as the leaders of these communities desist from publicity [publicly], declaring that they do not care for the enjoyment of equal civic rights, so long can the League be said to represent the 26 lakhs, even if all of them have not formally or actively identified themselves with the movement.<sup>35</sup>

The League pointed out that out of 4,000 jobs in the crucial Revenue Department, more than 3,800 were held by caste-Hindus.<sup>36</sup>

The League eventually got the concessions it sought in 1922 when the Revenue Department was separated from the Devasvam (or temple management) Department, thus removing the objection to non-Hindus and *avarnas* in the executive service. In 1925 the first Christian Dewan, an Anglo-Indian, and the first Christian district officer were appointed.<sup>37</sup>

The Civic Rights League had been quick to forget the anti-untouchability aspect of its original programme when the major grievance of educated Syrian Christians was met. However, for *avarna* Hindus—most importantly, Iravas—the separation of Revenue and Devasvam Departments meant little while they were still excluded from some roads and public buildings, had only a handful of men in the government service, and were prohibited from entering or approaching temples. The Civic Rights League, however, had drawn a number of educated Iravas into the genteel petitioning of state-level politics in Travancore. One such man was T.K. Madhavan (1885–1930), who was to engineer a much more vigorous assault on the civil disabilities of Iravas, especially the most galling of all to the educated, prosperous and ‘respectable’: the prohibition against entering temples.

#### IV

T.K. Madhavan was a good example of the Irava educated elite. He was born in 1885 into one of the great, landowning Irava matrilineal joint-families of central Travancore; his father came from another. The extensive Travancore school system allowed him to get a primary education close to home. He attended high school in the nearby town of Mavelikara, and eventually matriculated from a Roman Catholic high school in Quilon. His school experiences were crucial in impressing on him the disabilities of Iravas, disabilities which he later realized were shared by Iravas throughout the state.

On one occasion he mimicked the warning cry of a petty chief's Nayar servant who was clearing the road for his master. As punishment, Madhavan was severely beaten.<sup>38</sup> Of the another experience, he wrote:

My companion on my daily trip to and from the school was a Nayar boy . . . whose poor mother was a dependent of ours. He could go straight along all the roads, whereas I, in spite of being economically better off, had to leave the road every now and then [to avoid polluting caste-Hindus]. This used to cut me to the quick.<sup>39</sup>

Before he was twenty he was involved in social affairs, organizing and speaking to Iravas in central Travancore, and acting as an English translator for Irava notables attending the representative assembly in Trivandrum. He came under the influence of Sri Narayana Guru and the SNDP Yogam, the Irava caste association, and worked for the Yogam from 1914. In the following year he founded the newspaper *Deshabhimani* to publicize Irava grievances and achievements.<sup>40</sup>

Madhavan had worked with the Civic Rights League, and this experience probably influenced his views on how Iravas should campaign for the attainment of their civil rights. In the Civic Rights League, they had been used chiefly as an additional social category to bolster the arguments of educated Syrian Christians. Madhavan saw that this alliance with the Syrian Christian elite was not the only one open to educated Iravas. Indeed, it was perhaps not even the most desirable, for Christians did not rule Travancore; caste-Hindus did that. Madhavan turned away from the Christian alliance, and stressed the need for Iravas to win the co-operation of educated, progressive caste-Hindus. Such support, he argued, would demonstrate the changing times and cause the government to override the objections of the orthodox and abolish the old disabilities. By 1920, too, Madhavan had fallen under the spell of Gandhi. Those who knew Madhavan recall his white khadi dress, which he did much to popularize in Travancore, and the picture of Gandhi which he had embedded in the handle of his walking-stick. The rise of the Gandhian ethic greatly aided Madhavan, for hundreds of middleclass caste-Hindu youths also revered Gandhi and looked for a way to participate in his programmes.<sup>41</sup>

Madhavan first raised the question of temple-entry in an editorial in *Deshabhimani* in December 1917. The issue was discussed at

meetings of the SNDP Yogam and the Travancore assembly over the next three years, and Madhavan himself introduced resolutions calling for temple-entry and recognition of Iravas' status as respectable caste-Hindus. Taking note of the non-cooperation movement in British India, he began to advocate more direct methods, and threatened that Iravas would arbitrarily use roads close to temples, and enter temples to worship. In November 1920 he himself went beyond the restrictive notice boards on a road near the Vaikam temple in north Travancore, and announced this to the district magistrate to demonstrate the stupidity of the law.<sup>42</sup>

The temple-entry question simmered throughout the first nine months of 1921, as the non-cooperation movement boiled in British India. Madhavan and his supporters took temple-entry propaganda into the villages of central and north Travancore, and their meetings, which often attracted audiences of two to three thousand, provoked counter-demonstrations from orthodox Hindus. The state's armed police were alerted to prevent riots.<sup>43</sup> The Maharaja of Travancore at this time was the 64-year-old Mulam Tirunal, well educated in English, yet a simple and devout conservative, who had ruled since 1885, the year of Madhavan's birth. As long as Mulam Tirunal, Padmanabha's trustee, was on the gaddi there was no question of the temples being opened to all castes. At the same time, British governments, which might have put pressure on Travancore to liberalize its policies, were caught up in the non-cooperation movements, and were prepared to believe that any agitation in a princely state was seditious. Moreover, in Travancore itself, members of the Irava elite in the government service sought to keep the favour of the Maharaja and repudiated Madhavan's belligerent talk of forcible temple-entry and his attachment to the Indian National Congress.<sup>44</sup>

Confronted with a situation in which many prominent Iravas were not prepared to offend a government that was moderately good to them, Madhavan astutely set out to build his own support by broadening the base of his campaign. In doing so, he was taking the first step towards transforming many Iravas into the most radical political participants in the state.

When Gandhi came to South India in 1921, Madhavan managed to arrange an interview with him at Tinnevely and got his blessing for an agitation for temple-entry in Travancore. 'I would ask you', Gandhi began, 'to drop temple-entry now and begin with

public wells. Then you may go to public schools.' Madhavan quickly corrected him: 'You seem to mistake our position in society for something analogous to that of Panchamas in British India. Except half a dozen schools . . ., all public schools in this state are open to us . . .' Gandhi replied: 'You are ripe for temple-entry then.' He advised Madhavan 'to offer civil disobedience. You must enter temples and court imprisonment if law interferes.' This was a matter, Gandhi assured him, that the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (KPCC) should take up.<sup>45</sup> The interest and approval of Gandhi was a powerful weapon for Madhavan to use, not only among his castemen but among middle-class caste-Hindus.

Madhavan's interview came, however, as the Mappilla rebellion was sweeping the southern half of Malabar District. The Hindu middle class blamed the rebellion on the activities of the Congress in arousing the passions of illiterate Muslim peasants. It was two years before Malayalis generally, and Malayali Congressmen especially, began to recover from its effects.

In December 1923 Madhavan attended the Cocanada session of the Indian National Congress and was important in having a resolution establishing a committee on untouchability adopted. In January 1924 the KPCC, searching for a way to re-establish itself after the setback of the rebellion, met in Ernakulam and chose K. Kelappan, a Malabar Nayar who had worked in Travancore and been the first president of the Nair Service Society there, as convenor of an anti-untouchability committee.<sup>46</sup>

The roads around the great Siva temple at Vaikam in north Travancore were closed to *avarna* Hindus, as were the roads near most temples. Vaikam, however, had the advantage of easy communication by boat and road with the neighbouring princely state of Cochin, with the enclave of British Cochin, and with the Shertalai peninsula across the backwater, where an Irava working class had grown up around the coir industry.<sup>47</sup>

To appeal to as broad a section of caste-Hindus as possible, the demand at Vaikam was not for temple-entry, but for the right of *avarna* Hindus to use the roads near the temple. The orthodox, however, were to see this, correctly, as the thin edge of the wedge. Under the leadership of K.P. Kesava Menon, a Malabar Nayar, who was president of the KPCC and editor of the newspaper *Mathrubhumi*, a satyagraha was planned to begin on 30 March 1924. On that day, Kesava Menon announced, he would violate the



law by approaching the temple in the company of *avarna* Hindus. Four days before the satyagraha was to start, the district magistrate instructed the police to set up pickets to bar *avarnas* from using the temple roads; his stated aim was to prevent clashes between the satyagrahis and angry orthodox Hindus.<sup>48</sup>

On 30 March a Nayar, an Irava and a Pulaya, 'dressed in khaddar uniforms and garlanded', and followed by a crowd of 'thousands', attempted to use the roads. They were stopped by the police and arrested; the crowd dispersed, having been told that this procedure would be repeated each morning until low castes were permitted to use the roads.<sup>49</sup> The three volunteers were sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment when they refused to post bonds for good behaviour. The Vaikam satyagraha, 'a truly glorious fight', the *Hindu* correspondent wrote, 'to establish the dignity of man and his right of free movement', had begun.<sup>50</sup> It was to last for twenty months.

One can identify five stages in the long campaign:

1. The first began on 30 March 1924 when the three initial volunteers were arrested. The ritual of satyagraha and arrest continued until 10 April when the government decided to make no more arrests.

2. Instead, the police barricaded the roads against the satyagrahis, who sat before the barricades, fasted and sang patriotic songs. This period of excitement lasted from April to September. Vaikam commanded all-India attention and Gandhi advised the volunteers on their methods of satyagraha. Caste-Hindus instigated attacks by thugs on the volunteers.

3. In August, however, the old Maharaja died. His successor was a young Maharani Regent who immediately released the nineteen satyagrahis imprisoned in April. A third stage began, in which the satyagraha at Vaikam continued politely, but the most publicized activity was elsewhere. Two jathas of caste-Hindus marched through the state to demonstrate support for the demands of the satyagrahis and to symbolize the alliance with the caste-Hindu middle class which Madhavan sought to form. In October, N. Kumaran, the general secretary of the SNDP Yogam and a nominated member of the Legislative Council, introduced a resolution in the Council calling for the opening of roads around the temples. It was defeated by a single vote in February 1925, all the official members and one Irava opposing it.<sup>51</sup>

4. Gandhi's visit to the state in March 1925 marked the fourth stage. He talked to all parties, but the only arrangement he was able to make was for the withdrawal of the police parties and barricades on the understanding that the satyagrahis would not enter the forbidden streets.

5. The fifth stage, a period of waning interest, lasted until November 1925 when the government completed diversionary roads that could be used by the low castes without polluting the temple. Only a few lanes remained closed to low castes. On 23 November 1925, the last satyagrahi was withdrawn.<sup>52</sup>

To have sustained such a campaign for twenty months was a remarkable achievement. From where did the support come? First, perhaps, one should spell out clearly from where it did *not* come. It did not come in tangible forms from poor *avarna* Hindus. The vast majority were too fearful of their caste-Hindu landlords and employers to take an active part. The importance of the satyagraha, however, was that it aroused the keen interest and sympathy of thousands of poor men. Although the patron-client relationships that governed Travancore politics survived the Vaikam challenge intact, the satyagraha and the propaganda surrounding it, marked a new and damaging assault on these bastions.

From where, then, did support come? It came—cautiously, often clandestinely—from the Irava middle class, though many such men, having struggled as far as they had, were anxious to keep the favour of the government. It came also from some of the great Irava landed families of central Travancore to which Madhavan was related. However, of the nineteen men who were convicted in the first phase of the satyagraha, only seven were from Travancore, and only one of these—Madhavan himself—was an *avarna* Hindu.<sup>53</sup> The men who kept the campaign going were often middle-class caste-Hindus, imbued with the doctrines of the Gandhian Congress. Many of them, like K. Kelappan and K.P. Kesava Menon, were from Malabar District. Mannath Padmanabha Pillai, the general secretary of the Nair Service Society, the reforming pressure group of central and north Travancore Nayers, led one of the caste-Hindu jathas in support of the satyagraha.<sup>54</sup> Christians of all classes, on the other hand, had been soured on the campaign in April 1924 when Gandhi instructed the Syrian Christian Congressman, George Joseph, to leave the satyagraha strictly to Hindus.<sup>55</sup>

For Congressmen from Malabar District, the campaign gave an

opportunity to revive interest—at a safe distance—in a Congress that had suffered a severe setback with the Mappilla rebellion of 1921.<sup>56</sup> For Travancore Nayars, like Mannath Padmanabha Pillai, *avarna* Hindus were potential junior allies in the competition with Christians for land, jobs, education and control of the legislature and government service. Disabilities enforced against *avarna* Hindus increased the possibility of their converting to Christianity. Only a consolidated Hindu community could stand against the growing Christian middle class of businessmen, cash-crop farmers and professionals.<sup>57</sup> On the *avarna* side, N. Kumaran, the general secretary of the SNDP Yogam, applauded the alliance of the Hindu middle classes and acknowledged 'the very great support that is most generously accorded to this movement [Vaikam] by the Nayar community in every part of the country.'<sup>58</sup>

The attempt, however, to forge a united front of the *avarna* and caste-Hindu middle classes was never an unqualified success. It reached a peak in May 1924 when a large joint meeting of the SNDP Yogam and the Kerala Nair Samaj was held near Vaikam to support the satyagraha. It was, according to its supporters, 'the most inspired spectacle ever witnessed in Tracancore . . . attended by about 15,000 people . . . the hugest gathering . . . ever assembled in Travancore'.<sup>59</sup> Even if this was so, the meeting clearly showed the difficulties of trying to unite all Nayars on a statewide basis. Those 'aristocratic' Nayar families of south Travancore, who had long held the cosiest niches in the government and the best channels to the palace, stayed away from the conference. The reason, wrote one of their number, was that many disapproved of the satyagraha at Vaikam and of the participation of non-Travancoreans in Travancore politics.<sup>60</sup>

The satyagraha spread a new, radical rhetoric throughout the state. Calls for the abolition of caste, which were repeated with increasing insistence, offended and frightened the orthodox. One caste-Hindu wrote:

People do not object to associating with Thiyas of the Madhavan type—clean and cultivated—but it will want a lot of time and patience for us to mingle with the unwashed Thiya, who carries about his person live crabs and a pot of toddy, and who from time immemorial has had to stand out of the way of the higher caste people . . . What is to be the end of it all? Creating and continuing opposition will result in retarded progress of reform and if persisted in will lead to Bolshevism and bloodshed.<sup>61</sup>

Christians, offended by Gandhi's ban on their taking part in the movement, were quick to pour scorn on the loudly proclaimed unity of Nayers and Iravas. 'The interests of the two communities', a Christian wrote, 'are not the same.' Like orthodox Hindus, he too deplored the talk of intermarriage which some young men and women think 'will bring about the unity for which their leaders are striving hard'.<sup>62</sup>

There were also doubts about the commitment of Iravas to the leadership and methods of the Indian National Congress. Sri Narayana Guru, the holy man around whom the SNDP Yogam was organized and whose reputation accounted for the Yogam's influence among thousands of poor Iravas, had little enthusiasm for Gandhian methods. In June 1924 an Irava journalist created a furore by publishing the content of an informal conversation with the guru. Narayana held that 'the volunteers standing outside the barriers in heavy rains will serve no useful purpose. . . . They should scale over the barricades and not only walk along the prohibited roads but enter all temples. . . . It should be made practically impossible for anyone to observe untouchability.'<sup>63</sup> Gandhians were appalled at this suggested breach of non-violence, and by late June Narayana had written to Gandhi to assure him that there had been misreporting and misunderstanding.<sup>64</sup>

When Gandhi came to Travancore in March 1925, he and the guru soon found that there was one holyman too many in the state. Gandhi took issue with Narayana's motto, 'One caste, one religion, one God', while Narayana told Gandhi that 'he was not a believer in non-violence in agitations for removing social disabilities and that . . . he was anxious to secure for his community by *any* method, social equality . . . with caste Hindus including temple entry and admission to caste Hindu houses.'<sup>65</sup> Gandhi was said eventually to have persuaded the guru of the need for non-violence, yet such a concession can only have been grudging. Imported techniques and political figures were useful expedients on some occasions, but over the long term, they could not supplant Travancore leaders and their characteristic programmes.

The most important result of the satyagraha was the revolutionary rhetoric it encouraged throughout the state. One such voice was that of K. Aiyappan (1889-1968), an Irava. Aiyappan's father was a poor ayurvedic doctor of Cochin who died, leaving nine children, when Aiyappan was two years old. A brother who was also an



ayurvedist, connections with the SNDP Yogam, and the extensive Cochin and Travancore school system ultimately enabled Aiyappan to graduate from the Trivandrum college. He failed the first law examination and turned to journalism.<sup>66</sup> 'Just as the Russians managed to obtain freedom by putting an end to their Royal family,' he told a meeting of 2,000 people in the tough, coir workers' town of Shertallai at the height of the satyagraha, 'so the Ezhavas also must fight to the very end without caring (for) the guns of the sepoys, batons of the Police or even the Maharaja.'<sup>67</sup> It was not surprising that the officiating Dewan, an elderly Tamil Brahmin, found 'most of the satyagrahis imbued with some form of communism. They very often began to talk of the equal rights of men.'<sup>68</sup>

The Vaikam satyagraha began to point up class divisions, full of political potential, even among Iravas. Jathas and fund-raisers carried news of the satyagraha and the grievances of Iravas to the remotest villages of Travancore. Previously, the small Irava middle class, relying on its kinsmen in the villages and the devotion of even illiterate Iravas to Sri Narayana Guru, could claim convincingly to speak for 'the Iravas'. From the time of Vaikam, however, the fiery speeches of men like Aiyappan became more frequent, and doubts grew among poor, yet literate, Iravas about whether the right to use temple roads, or even temple-entry itself, held any solution to their problems. The satyagraha aroused the interest of thousands in the abolition of their disabilities, yet the results of the campaign were few. What fruits there were came in the shape of notoriety for middle-class leaders. N. Kumaran, for example, was taken into the government service as a judge.<sup>69</sup> Nor were the methods of the Indian National Congress, especially its emphasis on prohibition which T.K. Madhavan strongly supported, calculated to appeal to the large numbers of Iravas whose livelihood and pleasure often lay in toddy and arrack. Gandhi commented waspishly on the fact that the Travancore revenue drew Rs 27 lakhs from the abkari trade.<sup>70</sup>

Even among the small Irava middle class, there was disagreement about how the rights of 'respectable' citizens were to be won. Madhavan himself was committed to the 'sanskritizing' way—orthodox Hinduism, prohibition, temple-entry and association with caste-Hindus and the Indian National Congress. But there was a long tradition among Iravas of flirtation with Christian missionaries, and a few thousand Iravas had been converted to

Christianity.<sup>71</sup> By the 1920s, conversion to Buddhism was also being argued as a way of escaping from the disabilities enforced against *avarna* Hindus in Travancore.<sup>72</sup> Sri Narayana Guru, moreover, had fairly clearly shown his reservations about Gandhian non-violence. The precepts which had formerly governed society were no longer relevant; new, rival doctrines contended ceaselessly, everywhere.

In the aftermath of Vaikam, however, Madhavan 'tower [ed] above his immediate contemporaries',<sup>73</sup> and in 1927 became general secretary of the SNDP Yogam. Inspired by Gandhi and the Indian National Congress, he concentrated on membership and local organization. Within eighteen months he had increased the membership from 4,200 to 50,000, organized into 255 branches.<sup>74</sup> He promoted Vaikam-style satyagrahas, in co-operation with caste-Hindus, in other towns in Travancore.<sup>75</sup> However, by the time of his death from tuberculosis in 1930, *avarna* Hindus seemed little closer to temple-entry. The alliance with middle-class caste-Hindus, which had been prosecuted for ten years and was intended to melt the hearts of the orthodox and win over the Travancore government, had produced few concrete results. As late as 1936, all government-administered temples were still closed to *avarna* Hindus, as well as 11 miles and 778 feet of road and twenty-one travellers' bungalows.<sup>76</sup>

After the death of the conservative Maharaja Mulam Tirunal in 1924, the state had been ruled by a regency of the young, urbane Senior Maharani. Although she was said to be sympathetic to the demands for temple-entry, her authority was never complete,<sup>77</sup> palace politics were bitter and close-fought, and the power in the palace of conservative, aristocratic caste-Hindus was uncurtailed. These forces, moreover, had far better connections with the palace and the secretariat than caste-Hindus in central and north Travancore, and did not feel the pressure of the Syrian Christian middle class in the same way. They were late to notice what others felt keenly: that 'the centre of political gravity has moved from the caste Hindus to Christians, Eazhavas and Muslims'.<sup>78</sup> Mannath Padmanabha Pillai, the general secretary of the Nair Service Society, which had little following in south Travancore, dramatized the divergent outlooks of the new, competitive caste-Hindu middle class and the old, orthodox caste-Hindus of Trivandrum in a speech shortly before T.K. Madhavan's death in 1930. Padmanabha Pillai offered to help

in organizing Irava volunteer corps to enter temples by force. He claimed that the Malayali Brahmins of north Travancore were prepared to support temple-entry, but the Maharani Regent was misled by Tamil Brahmins in the palace in Trivandrum.<sup>79</sup>

## V

After Madhavan's death, the alliance with sections of the caste-Hindu middle class crumbled. Rather than attempt to convince the government of caste-Hindu support, younger Irava leaders now began to turn towards the aggrieved Christian middle classes and towards agitations designed to demonstrate political strength. The aim was, in a sense, to coerce where Madhavan had sought to cajole.

Gandhi's ban on Christian participation in the Vaikam satyagraha had done much to disenchant the Christian middle class with the Indian National Congress and its programmes. The Congress appeared too much a caste-Hindu organization. Christians in Travancore were having difficulty enough with a caste-Hindu government that seemed intent on denying them political and executive power commensurate with their economic and educational power.

In 1931 the young Maharaja came to the gaddi, and power over the state's administration passed largely into the hands of his mother, the Junior Maharani, and her friend and confidante, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Madras lawyer and politician, who came to the state as 'constitutional adviser'. Both were staunch Hindus. The Christian threat to the character of a Hindu state could, in Ramaswami Aiyar's view, be overcome by uniting all Hindus into a single, devout community without distinction of caste. Throwing open the government temples at the right moment could be a vital step in this process of consolidation.<sup>80</sup>

In 1932 the Travancore government introduced a long-awaited constitutional reform, of which Ramaswami Aiyar was undoubtedly the architect. However, instead of the new political opportunities for which the Christian middle classes hoped, the new system retained a land-tax franchise high enough to preserve the supremacy of caste-Hindus in the legislature.<sup>81</sup> In January 1933 the representatives of twelve Christian, Irava and Muslim organizations formed the Joint Political Congress to boycott the elections to the new legislature and to demand representation in the legislature and government service proportionate to community numbers. For the next five years, politics in the state was polarized intensely between

caste-Hindus and the Joint Political Congress. The leading Irava newspaper dismissed suggestions of Hindu unity as attempts at 'the exploitation of the Ezhava community for the maintenance of caste-Hindu supremacy'.<sup>82</sup>

Although the government was able to win over some Irava leaders, the SNDP Yogam fell into the hands of 'a few misguided Ezhava young men'.<sup>83</sup> They used the organization to propagate increasingly radical doctrines. 'The Nairs are making monkeys of the Ezhavas', C. Kesavan (1891-1969), the new general secretary, told a meeting in 1933. 'We want adult suffrage....We are not Hindus....Renounce this Hinduism.'<sup>84</sup> For some, temple-entry was no longer a vital issue.

Kesavan, like his contemporary, K. Aiyappan, was a good example of the growing number of educated Iravas whose rhetoric was becoming increasingly militant. To be sure, neither he nor Aiyappan joined the Communist Party after its establishment in Travancore in 1940. Indeed, Aiyappan by that time had married a judge's daughter and become an opportunist legislative politician in Cochin state. Kesavan remained a radical Congressman. Yet both were outspoken atheists all their lives, and their speeches in the 1930s undoubtedly propelled young, working-class Iravas towards atheism and eventually the Communist Party. Both Kesavan and Aiyappan came from large, humble families, and were in their late twenties before they were able to complete their BA degrees; but they were able to take degrees—a vital characteristic of Travancore and its vast education system.<sup>85</sup>

There was a receptive audience for radical speeches. The coir industry, which from the 1880s had relentlessly dragged thousands of Irava families into a cash economy, collapsed with the depression. From the end of the First World War, the coir mats and matting industry had shown a 'phenomenal increase', and 'high [wage] rates were paid not only because prices were high but also because the manufacturers wanted to attract men to the work.'<sup>86</sup> Many Iravas experienced a modest improvement in their standard of living. About 125,000 people were engaged in some aspect of the coir industry in 1931, about 10,000 of them in primitive factory conditions in Alleppey and the Shertallai peninsula.<sup>87</sup> With the depression, exports of coir yarn, a cottage industry employing thousands of Irava women, fell in value from Rs 125 lakhs in 1924-5 to Rs 64 lakhs in 1932-3. The export value of the factory-produced mats and



matting dropped from Rs 90 lakhs in 1927–8 to Rs 70 lakhs in 1932–3.<sup>88</sup> Wages were cut by as much as 70 per cent.<sup>89</sup> The men thrown out of work, or towards starvation, were literate and had known better times. Male literacy among Iravas in 1931 was 43 per cent, and one factory owner lamented that ‘our labourers are much more educated than those in British India. Most of them are able to read and even edit newspapers. Many of them deliver splendid lectures. Some of them are even able to compose beautiful poems in Malayalam.’<sup>90</sup> When there was a strike of coir workers in Alleppey in December 1933, among the slogans was the pregnant one: ‘Destroy the Nayars, destroy Nayar rule, destroy capitalism.’<sup>91</sup> Men were Iravas—that was still the easiest appeal to make to them; but they were awakening to the fact that they were also workers.

The two themes—the iniquity of social disabilities and the growing class consciousness—were brought together in a Malayalam book written in 1934. The author, E. Madhavan, born in 1903, was an Irava of Vaikam, who had studied up to matriculation and been involved in the SNDP Yogam from his youth. The book, *Svatantrasamudayam* (an independent community), called for Iravas to abandon all religions as equally false. ‘Right up to the present day, religion has not been able to benefit man,’ Madhavan wrote. Nayars, the devotees of Hinduism, stood between Iravas and their legitimate rights, and even those Nayars who had offered support during the Vaikam satyagraha had done so only for selfish ends. Iravas had no need of a religion that offered them only disadvantages and debasement. In these days of depression and unemployment, he continued, only the people of Russia were eating well; only in Russia had religion been abolished. The twenty photos in the book included T.K. Madhavan, C. Kesavan, K. Aiyappan, Jawaharlal Nehru and M.K. Gandhi; but the last was a picture of Lenin.<sup>92</sup>

These radical ideas circulated among the workers, whose economic grievances were joined with the low-caste middle-class’ call for political power and recognition of its ‘respectable’ status. At the same time, militant young Nayars, like P. Kesava Dev, the communist-inspired writer, worked in the trade union movement and advocated—and practised—inter-marriage of Nayars and Iravas.<sup>93</sup> The career of R. Sugathan (1902–70) illustrates the way in which poor Iravas came to the Communist Party. The son of an agricultural labourer who died young, Sugathan worked as a coolie and managed to pass the Malayalam higher certificate examination.

He then worked as a labourer in a coir factory, and was attracted to Aiyappan's *sahodaran* (brother) movement which advocated the rejection of all forms of religion. He became a teacher in a primary school, published poems in Aiyappan's *Sahodaran* journal and was involved with the SNDP Yogam. In the early 1930s he began to teach in the Travancore Labour Association school in Alleppey, and there he met Kesava Dev, who found Sugathan still one remove from a Marxist interpretation of the ills of society:

'If we destroy religion and caste, is it enough?' I [Kesava Dev] asked. 'If we destroy religion and caste, all other things will destroy themselves,' Sugathan replied.

Sugathan frequented the union office and eventually came to a Marxist view. He became a fulltime union organizer in 1935, went to jail for the first time in 1936 for organizing a demonstration of coir workers, and joined the Communist Party when it was formed in 1940.<sup>94</sup> Thousands of other men followed the same path: from concern with issues of religion and status to concern with those of economics and class.

## VI

The Irava middle class yearned for acceptance as caste-Hindus. Admission to the temples of the Maharaja would mark the conversion of wealth into honour. To achieve this end, Irava leaders were ready to use whatever leverage was available to force the government's hand. Although Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar undoubtedly saw the political advantages of opening the temples, he did not manoeuvre himself into the dewanship until 1936, and the Dewans from 1932-6 were a European and a Muslim, neither of whom could safely make innovations regarding Hindu temples.<sup>95</sup> There was, moreover, an exaggerated fear of a violent reaction from orthodox caste-Hindus if the temples were opened. In November 1932 the Travancore government appointed a Temple Entry Enquiry Committee which took more than a year to present its report and did not come out unequivocally in favour of opening the temples.<sup>96</sup> The government accepted its recommendation to open most roads, wells and tanks to all castes, and issued the announcement the day before Gandhi arrived in the state on his harijan tour in February 1934.<sup>97</sup> Such concessions merely encouraged demands for further reform.

With the Joint Political Congress demanding communal representation in the legislature on the basis of population, and showing its ability to make a mockery of elections, Iravas began to hold out the threat of conversion. As the police noted, 'Conversion means increase in the numbers of one community and as matters now stand, means more political power.'<sup>98</sup> From 1934 to 1936 calls for conversion became an almost daily occurrence in the vigorous Travancore vernacular press.<sup>99</sup> Buddhist, Muslim and Sikh missionaries toured the state and made a few converts. But the most potent threat was that of conversion to Christianity. The leading advocate was C.V. Kunjuraman (1871-1949), a wily editor and *vakil* and the father-in-law of C. Kesavan. Whether Kunjuraman had any intention of becoming a Christian is doubtful, but he was successful in convincing the police, the government and many of the European agents of the Church Missionary Society that thousands of Iravas were about to renounce Hinduism.<sup>100</sup>

Elections to the Travancore legislature were due in 1937. With the Joint Political Congress likely to follow the example of the Indian National Congress in British India and contest the elections, the government was concerned to isolate the Christian element of the JPC. Throughout the first half of 1936, pressure in favour of temple-entry among caste-Hindus mounted; so too did conversion activity and talk of mass conversion of Iravas. On 8 October 1936 Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar became Dewan, and on 12 November, the young Maharaja's birthday, a proclamation was issued which threw open all the government temples in the state to all Hindus. Rejoicing was widespread and opposition scant.<sup>101</sup>

From the government's point of view, the proclamation had many of the desired effects. The movement for conversion ended abruptly, and there were stories of recent converts returning to Hinduism.<sup>102</sup> The proclamation won the praise of Gandhi, who visited the state to take part in temple-entry celebrations in January 1937. It also brought dearly loved all-India publicity for Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and placed Travancore in advance of British India in such social matters. C.V. Kunjuraman, typifying the attitude of the older Irava middle class, welcomed the proclamation, banished thoughts of conversion from his mind and began to concern himself with the manner in which the glorious event should be commemorated.<sup>103</sup>

Entry to temples, however, was far from solving the problems of

all Iravas. E. Madhavan, for one, ridiculed it.<sup>104</sup> To allow men into a temple to offer food to a god was small comfort when they had no food for themselves. Irava workers of Shertallai immediately began entering temples in their vicinity—even the great Vaikam temple. They refused to abide by the dress restrictions and frightened away the Brahmins.<sup>105</sup>

In the long run, even the Irava middle class did not fall solidly behind the government. It lent much support to the movement against the Ramaswami Aiyar government organized by the Travancore State Congress in 1938. Only after the movement had been crushed did the SNDP Yogam and many middle-class Iravas see the wisdom of joining with the Nair Service Society once again to support the regime. This they did until after independence in 1947.<sup>106</sup>

The movement towards temple-entry revealed the changing concept of caste and the emergence of class as an important motivating force in Travancore politics. The caste rules enforced by a theocratic state were intensely galling to low-caste men newly educated in doctrines of merit and equality. Though in pre-British times Iravas may have had little awareness of themselves as a statewide group, the newly educated and prosperous strove to build a political community out of the common denominators shared by thousands of men called 'Iravas'. Yet in this process, there were palpable class divisions emerging, divisions that were accentuated as a cash economy and factory system spread within the state. Middle-class Iravas sought to be spokesmen for their poorer castemen and to use their numbers to support the claims, dear to their own hearts, for equality in all spheres of the state's life. Various strategies were open to them: alliance with the Christian middle classes for an assault on government, alliance with the caste-Hindu middle classes to cajole concessions from government, conversion to other faiths, or the advocacy of atheism and radical change. Perhaps the more militant courses were advocated initially to impress the government; but such programmes, once articulated by middle-class leaders, found a receptive audience among the literate Irava working-class. Moreover, a dispute concerning temples and religion was probably the quickest way to interest and involve thousands of the rural poor in agitational politics.

The distinctive arena of the princely state contributed to the movement for temple-entry as the arena of British India could never



have done. The decisive centre of power, the palace, was near at hand, accessible, potentially vulnerable. A Kshatriya Maharaja, unlike the British raj, could make a 'symbolic conversion of wealth into honour'<sup>107</sup> which would be acceptable and credible to his caste-Hindu subjects. The princely government, moreover, saw its future as being bound up with the success it might have in rallying its Hindu subjects round it. In that game, the grant of temple-entry came to be a valuable card to play.

The government had, unintentionally, done much to create the temple-entry demand. Its land reforms in the 1860s had established a secure and independent body of small proprietors, some of whom were low-caste men. Its encouragement of cash crops and the coir industry had similarly given a certain independence to men and women who had not enjoyed it before. Its heavy expenditure on education—far greater than anything British governments attempted—made it possible for the newly independent to put their children to school. To modernize to such an extent, yet still try to preserve the old social disabilities, was an impossibility. The gap between administrative-technical modernization and sociopolitical modernization became breathtakingly wide.

The recognition of the ritual equality of all Hindus, which temple-entry represented for the *avarana* middle class, did not bring about the consolidation of the Hindus into an orderly, pious community as the government had hoped. Indeed, the Hindu middle class in the years ahead was often divided within itself on communal lines. At the same time, however, the middle classes of various communities were less and less able to count on the support of their poor caste-fellows or to claim credibly that they alone were the spokesmen for all men of their community. The changes that occurred in the years after 1860 and were symbolized in the movement for temple-entry introduced ideas of radical programmes and agitational politics to thousands of poor men. When temple-entry brought no solution to their fundamental problems, they turned to parties and philosophies that promised to convert the honour and respect, conceded with temple-entry, into economic well-being.

## NOTES

1. *Travancore Legislative Council Proceedings* [hereafter *TLCP*], VI, 7 February 1925, p. 764, K.A. Krishna Aiyangar, nominated deputy president.

2. *Travancore Census Report* [hereafter *Census*], 1931, I, pp. 286–8.
3. *Censuses*.
4. A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteers: Trivandrum*, Trivandrum, 1962, pp. 202–3.
5. [Vishakhram Tirunal], 'A Native Statesman', *Calcutta Review*, LV, 1872, p. 251.
6. T.K. Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, IV, Trivandrum, 1940, p. 245; *Census*, 1875, p. 162.
7. *Travancore Administration Report* [hereafter *TAR*], 1930–1, pp. 237–8. When the government service, which administered the temples, was opened to people who were not caste-Hindus in the 1920s, a demand grew for an independent, entirely caste-Hindu board to control the temples. This was established after independence. There is much patronage available in temple administration, and in the 1930s and 1940s, a vigorous network of temples was seen by some as a way of countering the advantages Christians enjoyed from the organizational effectiveness of their churches. See, for example, *Hindu*, 17 July 1933, p. 7.
8. Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, trans. by M.L. Dames, II, London, 1921, p. 49.
9. Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847–1908*, London, 1976, pp. 70–103. For agrarian change, see T.C. Varghese, *Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences*, Bombay, 1970, pp. 43–8, 217.
10. *Census*, 1875, p. 231.
11. Robin Jeffrey, 'The Social Origins of a Caste Association, 1875–1905: The Founding of the S.N.D.P. Yogam', *South Asia*, 4, October 1974, pp. 140–2.
12. *Census*, 1875, pp. 197–8.
13. *Census*, 1881, p. 62. Jeffrey, *Nayar Dominance*, pp. 9–11.
14. For the debate over the usefulness of the social categories employed in the censuses, see James Manor, 'The Evolution of Political Arenas and Units of Social Organization: The Lingayats and Vokkaligas of Princely Mysore', in M.N. Srinivas, ed., *Aspects of Change in India*, Bangalore, 1973, and reviews by Christopher Baker and David Washbrook, *Modern Asian Studies*, V, 3, July 1971, pp. 276–83.
15. For mobility in traditional times, see Eric J. Miller, 'Caste and Territory in Malabar', *American Anthropologist*, LVI, 1954, pp. 410–20.
16. Jeffrey, 'Caste Association', pp. 47–8.
17. *Census*, 1891, II, pp. 854–67.
18. *Census*, 1931, I, p. 331.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 337–8. *Census*, 1941, I, p. 125.
20. For buses, *Madras Mail*, 21 June 1910, p. 6; 22 March 1911, p. 8; 24 September 1913, p. 3. There were 587 cars and buses imported between 1911 and 1921. *Census*, 1921, I, p. 18. By 1932 there were 1,200 buses in Travancore. *TLCP*, XXI, 12 August 1932, p. 1307. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *Ente Vakil Jivitam*, Kottayam, 1962, p. 16.
21. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Bombay, 1966, pp. 261, 265–83, 294–6.
22. *TARs and Statistics of Travancore*.

23. V.P. Madhava Rao, 'The Dewan's Tour. Inspection Notes', 16 May to 18 June 1904, Kerala Secretariat, Travancore Political Department, 97/1904. Three excellent examples of these new Irava entrepreneurs were K.C. Karunakaran, V. Kesavan, and K. Velayudhan. *S.N.D.P. Yogam Who Is Who*, Quilon, 1953, pp. 20-1, 229; and interview with N.K. Bhaskaran, great-grandson of V. Kesavan, Eravipuram, 22 August 1975. C. Kesavan, *Jivitasamaram*, Kottayam, 1968, I, p. 40. R. Sankar Shastiabdapurthi *Commemoration Volume*, Ernakulam, 1969, p. 193. Kesavan and Sankar, the two Iravas to become chief minister since independence, both came from families that ran tiny weaving enterprises at the turn of the century.
24. *Censuses*.
25. *Ibid*.
26. *Statistics of Travancore. Madras Mail*, 21 February 1917, p. 4.
27. *Travancore Directory*, 1938, pp. 817-30.
28. *Statistics of Travancore*, published annually from 1915-16.
29. Jeffrey, *Nayar Dominance*, pp. 17-19, 118-29.
30. *Statistics of Travancore*, 1920-1. Seven were in Changanacherry, three in Mavelikara and one in Kottayam, all important Syrian Christian centres.
31. C.P. Matthen, *I Have Borne Much*, Madras, 1951, pp. 34-41. The value of cashew exports rose from a few thousand rupees in 1926 to more than 10 lakhs in 1932 and more than 80 lakhs by 1937, the only industry to prosper through the depression. *Statistics of Travancore*.
32. *Census*, 1921, II, pp. 102-3.
33. *Madras Mail*, 8 February 1906, p. 5; 29 July 1909, p. 5; 23 March 1910, p. 6; 13 May 1910, p. 3; 3 September 1912, p. 3; 10 July 1914, p. 3; 20 July 1915, p. 3; 15 March 1916, p. 3; 18 May 1917, p. 3; 5 May 1919, p. 3; 6 September 1920, p. 6. For a helpful discussion of elites in a similar society, see Michael Roberts, 'Elite Formation and Elites, 1832-1931', in K.M. de Silva, ed., *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, III, Colombo, 1973, pp. 263-84.
34. *Madras Mail*, 14 January 1920, p. 3; 15 May 1922, p. 4.
35. *Madras Mail*, 7 May 1919, p. 5, letter from John Chandy, Kottayam.
36. P.K.K. Menon, *History of the Freedom Movement in Kerala*, II, Trivandrum, 1972, p. 289, quoting *Malayala Manorama*, 14 December 1922.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 288-9. *Madras Mail*, 5 October 1920, p. 6; 8 April 1920, p. 3; 10 May 1925, p. 6. The Dewan was M.E. Watts, an Anglo-Indian Roman Catholic, whose father had been chief secretary of the Travancore government.
38. P.K. Madhavan, *Ti. Ke. Madhavante Jivitacaritram*, Trivandrum, 1936, pp. 15-18.
39. Quoted in A. Aiyappan, 'Iravas and Culture Change', *Madras Government Museum Bulletin*, V, 1, 1943, pp. 45-6.
40. *S.N.D.P. Yogam Who Is Who*, pp. 192-3. K.R. Narayanan, 'Ti. Ke. Madhavan', in *S.N.D.P. Yogam Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, Quilon, 1953, p. 103.
41. Narayanan, 'Madhavan', pp. 103-4. Interview, A.P. Udayabhanu, Calicut, 13 November 1975.
42. *Madras Mail*, 18 May 1920, p. 5; 24 May 1921, p. 6. Narayanan, 'Madhavan', p. 104. T.K. Madhavan to the District Magistrate, 13-4-1906 [c. 30 November 1920], Kerala Secretariat, Travancore Confidential Section [hereafter CS], 554/1920. *Sree Mulam Popular Assembly, Fifteenth Session*, Trivandrum, 1919, p. 88.

45. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* [hereafter CWMG], XXI, pp. 185–8, interview on 23 September 1921, published in the *Hindu*, 30 September 1921.
46. Narayanan, 'Madhavan', p. 104.
47. Ibid., p. 222, for Madhavan's propaganda sense.
48. Ibid., p. 204. 'Official Note Regarding the Vycome Satyagraha with the Remarks of the Officer in Charge of the Administration Thereon', 17 April 1924, Kerala Secretariat, Vaikam Bundle [hereafter VB]. No. 1.
49. *Hindu*, 31 March 1924, VB, No. 4. Newspaper references that follow are from VB, No. 4, unless a page reference is given.
50. Ibid.
51. *TLCP*, VI, 7 February 1925, pp. 767–73. The lone Irava vote against the resolution was P. Parameswaran's. Ironically, Parameswaran, an official nominee, was the brother of Dr P. Palpu one of the founders of the SNDP Yogam.
52. 'Official Note . . .', VB, No. 4. *Madras Mail*, 9 February 1925, p. 4.
53. C. Rajagopalachari, who visited the satyagraha, was 'extremely dissatisfied with the small share taken by Eazhavas in the movement'. *Hindu*, 27 May 1924.
54. Narayanan, 'Madhavan', p. 205.
55. *Hindu*, 5 May 1924, K.M. Panikkar, *Atmakatha*, I, Trichur, 1967, p. 100.
56. Interview with K.P. Kesava Menon, Calicut, 25 November 1975.
57. Jeffrey, *Nayar Dominance*, pp. 243–51.
58. *TLCP*, VI, 2 October 1924, p. 330.
59. *Hindu*, 5 May 1924.
60. *Trivandrum Daily News*, 26 May 1924.
61. *Madras Mail*, 5 May 1924.
62. *Madras Mail*, 10 July 1924, p. 4. *Trivandrum Daily News*, 27 May 1924.
63. *Hindu*, 6 June 1924.
64. Narayana Guru to Gandhi, 27 June 1924, *Young India*, 10 July 1924, in CWMG, XXIV, pp. 363–5. See also, p. 259.
65. W.H. Pitt, Police Commissioner, 'Report on the Tour of M.K. Gandhi in Travancore', 24 March 1925, VB, No. 7.
66. K.A. Subramaniam, *Sahodaran Ayyappan*, Cochin, 1973, pp. 63, 70, 76.
67. Inspector of Police to District Superintendent of Police, 4-9-1099 [c. 15 April 1924], VB, No. 5.
68. R. Viraraghava Aiyengar, Memorandum, 24 April 1924, VB, No. 1.
69. *S.N.D.P. Yogam Who Is Who*, p. 51.
70. *Young India*, 26 March 1925, in CWMG, XXIV, p. 407. Gandhi claimed that Christians were the heaviest drinkers, which, even if true, was not tactful.
71. Jeffrey, 'Caste Association', pp. 46–8.
72. *Hindu*, 10 May 1924. *Madras Mail*, 4 April 1923, p. 5. Kumaran Asan repudiated conversion to Buddhism as a possible strategy in his *Matapari-varttana Rasvadam* [the alchemy of conversion], Trivandrum, 1971, first published, 1923.
73. O.M. Thomas, *Under the Knife*, Allahabad, 1970, p. 48.
74. Narayanan, 'Madhavan', pp. 221–2.
75. At Suchindram in 1926 and Tiruvarppu in 1927. The latter coincided with



- another visit from Gandhi. *CWMG*, XXVII, pp. 98–100, 114–20, 131. DSP, Kottayam, to Police Commissioner, 10 October 1927, CS, 846/1927.
76. CS, 783/1925. Maramat Engineer to Chief Secretary, 30 November 1935, CS, 1365/1936. CS, 1622/1936, 772/1929.
  77. *CWMG*, XXVI, p. 293.
  78. *Kerala Kaumudi*, 29 November 1937, CS, 776/1940.
  79. CS, 834/1930.
  80. Ramaswami Aiyar's view was never stated so baldly, but it comes through clearly in his newspaper statements and notations on office files through the 1930s and 1940s. For a further discussion, see Robin Jeffrey, 'A Sanctified Label—"Congress" in Travancore Politics, 1938–48' in D.A. Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*, London, 1977.
  81. R. Ramakrishnan Nair, *Constitutional Experiments in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1964, pp. 12–17.
  82. Madras States, *Fortnightly Report*, second half of January 1933 [hereafter *FR1* or *FR2*], National Archives of India, Home Political, 18/1/1933. Kesavan, *Samaram*, I, pp. 51–60. *Hindu*, 27 January 1933, p. 14. *Kerala Kaumudi*, 23 April 1936, quoted in *Weekly Secret Bulletin* [hereafter *WSB*] III, 17, 25 April 1936.
  83. C.O. Madhavan to Chief Secretary, 31 October 1933, CS, 1338/1933. Madhavan was the highest ranking Irava in government service.
  84. Police Report, 28 October 1933, CS, 1129/1933.
  85. C. Achutha Menon, *Smaranayute Etukal* [pages of recollection], Trivandrum, 1971, pp. 85–92, for an appreciative essay on Kesavan as a 'progressive' by the communist chief minister of Kerala. K. Aiyappan, '*Keralattile Samudayapariskaram*' [social reform in Kerala], in *S.N.D.P. Souvenir*, p. 80, for the helpful role of the Communist Party in bringing about social change. *S.N.D.P. Yogam Who Is Who*, pp. 7–9; Subramaniam, *Is Sahodaran Ayyapan*, pp. 63–79. *Cochin Legislative Council Proceedings*, 6th Council, II, 12 April 1946, p. 896. P. Kesava Dev, *Ormakalute Lokattil* [in the world of memories], Kottayam, 1970, pp. 145–6.
  86. *Report of the Board of Conciliation of Trade Disputes in the Mats and Matting Industry 1939*, Trivandrum, 1953, pp. 73 and 89 [hereafter *George Report* after its chairman].
  87. *Census*, 1931, I, p. 248. *George Report*, pp. 185 and 129, estimated 27,000 were employed in factories in 1939.
  88. *Statistics of Travancore*.
  89. *Hindu*, 10 May 1938, p. 3, said 75 per cent. *George Report*, p. 108, estimated a fall of 50 to 70 per cent.
  90. *Sri Mulam Assembly Proceedings* [hereafter *SMAP*], VII, 18 November 1935, p. 478; Kesava Dev, *Ormakalute Lokattil*, p. 145.
  91. *SMAP*, VII, 12 November 1938, p. 35.
  92. *S.N.D.P. Yogam Who Is Who*, pp. 189–90. E. Madhavan, *Svatantrasamudayam* [an independent community]. Parur, 1935, pp. 149–50, 83–5, 12, 254, 246, Lenin's picture is between pp. 264–5.
  93. Kesava Dev, *Ormakalute Lokattil*, pp. 147–51. *WSB*, II, 37, 14 September 1935. V.K. Velayudhan, for example, became secretary of the Travancore

- Labour Association in 1934 and succeeded C. Kesavan as general secretary of the SNDP Yogam in 1935.
94. Kesava Dev, *Ormakalute Lokattil*, pp. 145–6. *Communist Party of India 9th Congress Souvenir*, Cochin, 1971, pp. 63–4. *Hindu*, 21 September 1934, p. 14; 27 April 1936, p. 20; 23 March 1937, p. 16. Sugathan was elected to the legislature in all four elections between 1952 and 1960. He never married or acquired wealth, and was widely respected for his simple style of living.
  95. For Ramaswami Aiyar's position in Travancore and the opposition of the Political Department to his assumption of the dewanship, see India Office Library and Records, Crown Representative Records [hereafter CRR], R/1/29/1361 and R/1/29/1485.
  96. *Report of the Temple Entry Enquiry Committee*, Trivandrum, 1933, p. 80.
  97. *Ibid.*, p. 82. Madras States, *FR2*, January 1934. CS, 923/1924 [sic].
  98. *WSB*, III, 30, 25 July 1936.
  99. *WSB*, II, 43, 26 October 1935; 51, 21 December 1935; 52, 28 December 1935; III, 7, 15 February 1936, for examples.
  100. C.V. Kunjuraman, *Izhavarute Mataparivartana Samrambham* [Irava conversion preparation], Kottayam, 1936. *WSB*, III, 10, 7 March 1936; 15, 11 April 1936. Interview with V.K. Velayudhan, Trivandrum, 20 October 1971. Velayudhan was quite clear that the conversion threat was merely a ploy.
  101. *WSB*, III, 9, 29 February 1936; 10, 7 March 1936; 17, 25 April 1936; 22, 30 May 1936; 30, 25 July 1936. Menon, *Freedom Movement*, II, pp. 308–10. See also Nilkan Perumal, *A Hindu Reformation*, Madras, 1937, and Mahadev Desai, *The Epic of Travancore*, Ahmedabad, 1937.
  102. *WSB*, III, 51, 19 December 1936; 52, 26 December 1936; IV, 1, 2 January 1937.
  103. *Kerala Kaumudi*, 3 January 1937, in C.V. Kunjuraman, *Tirannetutta Kratikai* [selected works], ed. by Puthuppalli Raghavan, Quilon, 1971, pp. 212–19.
  104. *WSB*, IV, 4, 23 January 1937.
  105. Kerala Secretariat, Temple Entry Proclamation File, 12/11/1936.
  106. See Jeffrey, 'Sanctified Label'.
  107. F.G. Bailey, *Stratagems and Spoils*, Oxford, 1970, p. 156.

## 5

PUNJAB STATES  
Maharajas and  
Gurdwaras: Patiala and  
the Sikh Community

BARBARA N. RAMUSACK

## I

It was with a sense of triumph that the Akalis arranged the cleansing of the tank [*kar seva* of the Golden Temple]. The operation, which is performed after every two or three decades to remove the accumulation of sediment left by millions of pilgrims who bathe in the holy water, took one month to complete during which hundreds of thousands of Sikhs from all over India and abroad came to Amritsar.<sup>1</sup>

During June 1923 Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala was among the multitude of Sikhs who co-operated in this spiritually beneficial but physically distasteful labour. Clad only in his undershirt and *kach* (short drawers prescribed by the tenth Guru of Sikhism), this Sikh prince, who had a 19-gun personal salute, waded into the slimy water of the sacred tank at the central holy place of Sikhism and picked up a shovelful of mud, as priests chanted Sikh scriptures.<sup>2</sup> The reasons why Bhupinder performed this seemingly humble yet well-publicized act of service were complex but illuminating. First, he sought to reaffirm dramatically his commitment to Sikhism during an era in which both his religion and his political position were under attack. Second, he wanted to confront an element within the Sikh community, the Akalis, who challenged his religious credentials and increasingly his political authority, on their own territory. Third, he was personally ambitious and anxious to play a role in events beyond the boundaries of his state. Fourth, he aimed to undercut the Sikh support for his personal and family rival, Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, who was to abdicate on 7 July 1923.<sup>3</sup> This episode, however, is just one instance of how an Indian prince might use his religious heritage and affiliations to reinforce and expand his political authority.

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It is a striking anomaly that such limited attention has been directed toward the relationship between religious status and activity and the power base of Indian princes. Religion is often a key factor in the legitimatization and maintenance of political power, and nowhere is this phenomenon more likely to occur than in South Asia where religion has long been a primary source of individual and group identity. Since both their antagonists and their proponents usually portray the princes as remnants of traditional India, and since religion is seen as a major force in traditional India, an examination of this topic might yield insight on some important questions. What circumstances promoted or discouraged princely involvement in religious communal activity? If a prince sought a positive religious identification, what were the consequences for him, his subjects, and his religious community? Did such communal activity provide a viable means of preserving princely political authority when both the British patron on one hand and popular political associations on the other, were attempting to circumscribe princely power? Finally, since religion crossed the political boundaries between British and princely India, what impact did communal involvement by princes have on political relations between, and the eventual integration of, these two political divisions?

This chapter will seek one set of answers to such general questions through a scrutiny of two princes—Maharaja Bhupinder Singh (born 1891, succeeded 1900, died 1938) and Maharaja Yadavindar Singh (born 1913, succeeded 1938, died 1974), his son and successor—and their efforts to promote their reputations as Sikh rulers and the reputation of Patiala as the premier Sikh state. They had personal reasons for participating aggressively in Sikh communal politics: strong egos and traditional family rivalries with neighbouring and related princes. But there were also powerful political reasons. To be acknowledged by the British as 'leader of the Sikhs' brought enhanced respect from the paramount power—and later from the government of independent India. Patiala thereby gained latitude and favours in the managing of its affairs. At the same time, to be accepted by the Sikh community of Patiala—and Punjab generally—as 'leader of the Sikhs' forged for the Maharaja an alliance with one of the dominant groups of the region. To be able to influence and guide the activities of such an important community helped to guarantee the political stability of the state.



The external circumstances conducive to princely participation in Sikh communal politics were the burgeoning challenge to princely political power and the situation of the Sikh community on the eve of the twentieth century. Bhupinder Singh perceived that both his subjects and an increasingly centralized British Government of India threatened to limit his political authority. On the eve of his assumption of full ruling powers in 1909, the young prince became alarmed over reports of sedition in his state. He then took drastic measures to suppress the local branch of the Arya Samaj which he viewed as a centre of political opposition.<sup>4</sup> During his reign he continued to discourage the formation of popular political associations in Patiala but he was increasingly confronted with pleas, and then demands, for the guaranteed exercise of civil rights such as freedom of speech, an end to arbitrary police activity, greater independence for the judiciary, a basic division of state revenues into public and private accounts, and some introduction of representative government.<sup>5</sup> Unwilling to respond positively to these requests, Bhupinder undertook certain window-dressing reforms (such as the introduction of panchayats), and sought to improve the efficiency, though not necessarily the responsiveness, of his administration.<sup>6</sup> At the same time he entered Sikh communal politics to disarm his Sikh critics. Thus he hoped to develop an effective image as a Sikh leader, an image that would counter the one as an autocrat, and would help to deflect political criticism from himself and his administration.

The Maharaja modified his tactics slightly to deal with the apparently overwhelming power of his British patron. He fulfilled British requests for military and political assistance speedily and generously so that he might be assured British protection from political agitators based in British India. Still, his participation in Sikh communal politics demonstrated his prestige in another sphere and tended to blunt British concern about his internal administrative affairs.

This chapter is divided into seven sections. Section II traces the background of the establishment of the state of Patiala and examines its chequered history as a bastion of Sikhism. Section III looks at the circumstances and events involved in Maharaja Bhupinder Singh's whole-hearted re-entry into Sikh communal politics from about 1910. Section IV follows Patiala's role in the gurdwara-reform movement and turbulent politics of the 1920s. It attempts to

show how the Maharaja maintained his mediatory role with the British, outmanoeuvred his old princely foe, Nabha, yet still managed to maintain the support of large sections of Sikhs. Patiala, however, did alienate the radical Akalis and fell into some disfavour with the British. This is explored in Section V, which concludes with the accommodation between the Akalis and Patiala that allowed the state once more to proclaim, unchallenged, its primacy in the Sikh community. Section VI demonstrates how useful that acknowledged primacy was to Maharaja Yadavindar Singh, Bhupinder's successor, in the stormy years of partition and post-independence Indian politics. Section VII is a brief conclusion, which points to the importance of Patiala's earlier use of religion both in maintaining the family fortunes and integrating princely and ex-British Punjab in the period after 1947.

## II

Conditions within the Sikh community helped advance Patiala's involvement in its internal and external political activities. During the nineteenth century Sikhism, like Hinduism and Islam, had faced challenges from Christian missionaries, western education, and British political power. It had responded to these threats primarily through Singh Sabhas, local associations formed from the 1870s onward to reform, purify, and promote Sikhism. The programmes of the Singh Sabhas gradually raised two crucial questions: what constituted orthodoxy in Sikh doctrines and rituals and what was the relationship between Hinduism and Sikhism. While Sikhism had its origins in Hinduism, many argued that Sikhism was a distinctive religion; others maintained that Sikhism was a reform sect within the broad Hindu tradition.<sup>8</sup> Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, had been a Hindu mystic who began to organize a *bhakti* or devotional cult around 1499. His teachings emphasized a monotheistic God, the goal of ultimate union with the Formless One, the importance of the guru for salvation, the need to live in the world but remain pure, and a casteless brotherhood of believers.<sup>9</sup> Nanak's nine successors, especially Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last guru, gradually transformed his pacifist sect into a militant community with a holy scripture, the *Adi Granth* or *Guru Granth Sahib*; egalitarian rituals such as baptism; distinctive symbols, the five *k's* of *kes*, unshorn hair; *kangha*, comb; *kach*, short drawers; *kara*, steel bracelet; and *kirpan*, steel sword; and a new writing script, Gur-

mukhi, which the Sikhs used for the Punjabi language.

These religious debates intensified in the closing decades of the nineteenth century just as the British raj began to increase the government opportunities available to Indians, such as jobs, grants-in-aid for schools, and seats on municipal, provincial and central legislative bodies. Though Sikhs constituted only about one per cent of the total Indian population, they were becoming increasingly concerned about what they viewed as their meagre share of these openings at precisely the same time that they were emphasizing their religious distinctiveness from Hinduism. To lobby more effectively, they sought unity among themselves and formed broader based organizations such as the Chief Khalsa Diwan (1902) to promote religious and social reform; the Sikh Educational Conference (1908) to support institutions which would strengthen Sikhism in the young and qualify them for government positions; the Central Sikh League (1919) to agitate for political goals; and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (1920, hereafter referred to as the SGPC) to control Sikh holy places and rituals.<sup>10</sup>

Though a tiny minority among the vast population of India, the Sikhs had memories of political dominance and glory in the Punjab. During the chaotic middle decades of the eighteenth century, as Mughal governors, Afghans, Persians, Marathas, and even European freebooters fought for political control, the Sikhs formed twelve *misals*, loosely organized military confederacies controlling the revenues of scattered territories. In 1799 Ranjit Singh of the Sukerchakia *misal* began to create a Sikh kingdom of Punjab from the holdings of other Sikh *misaldars* and local Muslim and Hindu chieftains, using marriage arrangements, military force, intimidation, and adroit alliances. The British East India Company respected his Lahore-based state during his lifetime, though they limited his eastward expansion at the Sutlej River. Ranjit's successors lacked his abilities, had very brief reigns, and the British were able to annex his state in 1848. When British territorial aggrandizement in India ceased in 1857, evidence of Sikh political dominance existed only in the semi-autonomous states of Patiala, Nabha, and Jind of the Phulkian *misal*, Faridkot, a distant relation of the Phulkians, Kapurthala of the once mighty Ahluwalia *misal*, and Kalsia of the Karora *misal*.

By 1911 only Patiala and Nabha had likely candidates for leadership within the Sikh community. Bhupinder Singh had succeeded to

his gaddi in 1900 as a minor and was invested with full ruling powers in 1910; Ripudaman Singh succeeded as an adult in 1912. Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Jind occupied his throne from 1899 to 1948, but his deafness made him reserved and politically inactive. Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala had an even longer reign, from 1890 to 1949, but he preferred the pleasures of salmon-fishing in Scotland and life in Paris to those at the Versailles-like palace in his capital. Faridkot was the one state with a Sikh majority in its population, but it experienced two long periods of minority rule, from 1906 to 1914 and 1918 to 1934. Kalsia had only 192 square miles of territory and lacked the material resources necessary for its prince to parade on an external stage. Bhupinder Singh thus had only one strong princely rival for political prominence in the Sikh community. Unfortunately the young prince was also burdened with an assortment of historical obstacles to overcome.

Patiala was the largest Sikh-ruled state by 1910, having 5,942 square miles, but it did not have a Sikh majority in its population. The 1881 census recorded the religious composition of the Patiala population as 50.1 per cent Hindu, 27.8 per cent Sikh, and 21.9 per cent Muslim. By the 1931 census (the last full-scale enumeration prior to integration), it had shifted to 38.2 per cent Hindus, 38.9 per cent Sikh, and 22.4 per cent Muslim. This census report attributed the general increase in Sikhs throughout the Punjab not to conversion or immigration but to a gradual awareness of Sikhism as a distinctive religion and to a feeling among lower caste members that there was more prestige in being a Sikh than a Hindu.<sup>11</sup> This trend continued in the 1941 census where the division among Patialan communities was 30.9 per cent Hindu, 46.3 per cent Sikh and 22.6 per cent Muslim. Thus by 1941 Patiala had almost a majority of Sikhs, while the British district with the highest percentage of Sikhs, Ludhiana, had only 41.7 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

For many Sikhs the ruling house of Patiala did not have a commendable record as a supporter of the *Panth* or *Khalsa* (the Sikh community). As Khushwant Singh, a contemporary Sikh journalist and scholar, so bluntly asserted:

Phoolkia, under Ala Singh of Patiala, was the twelfth misal, but it was not part of the Dal Khalsa, and sometimes acted against the interests of the community.<sup>13</sup>

Part of this harsh judgement is related to Patiala's situation in



relation to basic geographical and social divisions in Punjab. The Phulkian *misal* had originated south of the Sutlej River in the Malwa area of Punjab and was associated with the rivalries and stereotypes of that region. The other eleven *misals* were generally north and west of the Sutlej and were concentrated in the Manjha tract between the Beas and Ravi Rivers. The Manjha was a more fertile area than Malwa and was therefore more prosperous. It also contained the key political, religious, and commercial centres of Lahore and Amritsar and thought of itself as more cosmopolitan than the dusty tracts of Malwa. Peoples in these two areas developed stereotypes of each other which seemed to influence both thoughts and actions. A. Bingley, the British author of a manual on Sikhs written for army recruiting officers, preserved one example of the alleged differences between Malwa and Manjha Sikhs when he noted:

As regards military qualities, it is doubtful whether there is anything to choose between the two. 'The Manjha Sikh is as a rule brighter, smarter, quicker, and more refined than the Malwai, while the latter is more stubborn, works as conscientiously but less cheerfully, and from his very stolidity and obtuseness is equally staunch while nowise inferior in either courage or discipline.'<sup>14</sup>

Such ideas had long been current and were one factor contributing to the negative image of the Phulkian *misal* held by its brethren *misals* across the Sutlej.

The rulers of Patiala themselves had acted upon occasion in ways that could be viewed as hostile to the *Panth*. In 1762 Ala Singh (born 1691, died 1765), the founder of the Patiala house, accepted the title of raja and a court dress from Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Afghan Muslim who appeared almost annually to challenge the Sikhs in the 1750s and 1760s. Then Raja Sahib Singh (born 1773, succeeded 1781, died 1813) opposed Ranjit Singh and concluded a treaty of subsidiary alliance with the British East India Company in 1809 which placed his state under British paramountcy and protection. Finally, Raja Narindar Singh (born 1824, succeeded 1846, died 1862) supported his British overlord during the First Anglo-Sikh War of 1846 when other Sikh-ruled states such as Nabha fought with the *Khalsa*.<sup>15</sup>

In the Sikh reform movement of the late nineteenth century, the princes and officials of Patiala were not particularly active. Raja Bikram Singh of Faridkot (born 1842, succeeded 1874, died 1898)

took the lead as one of the organizers of the first Singh Sabha in Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs founded by the fifth Guru, Arjun. Bikram also contributed generously to various Sikh educational projects and financed the preparation and publication of a new edition of the *Guru Granth Sahib* with a commentary by Sant Badan Singh.<sup>16</sup> Maharaja Hira Singh of Nabha (born c. 1843, succeeded 1871, died 1911) operated in a less ostentatious manner, but contributed to the establishment of the Khalsa Printing Press at Lahore, was a patron of the Khalsa College at Amritsar and promoted the use of Sikh rituals, especially the Anand form of marriage.<sup>17</sup> The rulers of Patiala were less prominent primarily because they were so short-lived during the nineteenth century. But even when a prince with full ruling powers was on the gaddi, he did not always promote Patiala's reputation as a friend of all Sikhs. In 1872 Maharaja Mohindar Singh (born 1852, succeeded 1862, died 1876) responded promptly to a British request for assistance in the suppression of the Kukas, an ultra-orthodox Sikh sect which had launched an attack on Malerkotla, a nearby Muslim-ruled state.<sup>18</sup>

Within its own administration, the rulers of Patiala and their Councils of Regency were not noted as strong proponents of Sikh interests. The central administration usually consisted of four departments, the revenue and finance, the foreign, the judicial, and the military, which were headed by ministers or secretaries.<sup>19</sup> While Sikhs were usually dominant in the military department, many state officials were Hindu or Muslim and born outside the state.<sup>20</sup> In 1901 the Council of Regency also employed two British officers: Major F. Popham Young to revise the land settlement and J.O. Warburton to reorganize the police department. Increasingly, Sikhs would ask for a greater portion of government jobs; at the same time, all subjects of Patiala were anxious to exclude persons born outside the state from government service. Not only did the outsiders take jobs away, but they also promoted their own communal interests. The Sayyid brothers who were prominent during the late nineteenth century were major supporters of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh and of the retention of Urdu in the state courts and administrative records.<sup>21</sup>

The relationship between the ruling house of Patiala and the Sikh community had episodes of neglect and of open hostility; but it also included incidents of beneficial accommodation and active co-operation. Bhupinder Singh could trace his family contact with Sikhi-

ism back to the early seventeenth century. He was of the Sidhu Jat clan, which claimed descent from a Bhatti Rajput, Jesal, who was forced northward by a rebellion in his state in 1180. His clan allegedly became Jats when a Rajput male was forced to contract marriage with a Jat woman to produce a male heir who then assumed the caste of his mother. By 1526 Bairam, another ancestor, had secured a grant from Babur of a *chaudhriyat* of some waste country to the southwest of Delhi in return for service during the battle of Panipat. Phul (died 1652), the founder of the Phulkian *misal*, is reputed to have been introduced as a young man to Har Govind in 1618, and the sixth Guru is said to have proclaimed that Phul (whose name means flower) would bear many blossoms and would satisfy the hunger of many. This initial encounter with Sikh leaders was maintained and enhanced by Rama (died 1714), who was the second son of Phul and the actual ancestor of the Patiala ruling house. Rama is said to have been a follower of Guru Gobind Singh, but there is no evidence on the date of his baptism, and he did not take the name of Singh.<sup>22</sup> In 1696 Guru Gobind asked Rama to join him in an expedition against Prince Muazzam, the son of Aurangzeb, who was *en route* to Kabul. In a letter of 2 August 1696 the tenth Guru declared: 'I am much pleased with you. Your house is my own . . .'<sup>23</sup> It is generally believed that Rama did not participate actively as requested; but he preserved the letter for his heirs and expanded their patrimony.

Ala Singh, with his brother Ram Singh, was the first of the Phulkian *misal* to take the name of Singh, and he attempted to cultivate close ties with Sikh leaders whenever possible. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the leading Sikh *misaldar* of the mid-eighteenth century and the founder of Kapurthala state, assisted Ala by arguing that the latter had no choice but to accept the title and the robe of honour from the Afghan enemy since he had no resources to pay the ransom demanded by Ahmad Shah.<sup>24</sup> Once rehabilitated, Ala Singh joined the other Sikh *misaldars* in the campaign of 1763–4 against the Afghan governor to capture Sirhind, a place of ignominy because the two sons of Guru Gobind Singh had been walled up alive there in 1705 by a Mughal official. The Sikhs were victorious, razed Sirhind, and allotted the district to Patiala. Many date the formal origin of Patiala as a political entity from this episode.<sup>25</sup>

Raja Amar Singh (born 1748, succeeded 1765, died 1782), the

grandson of Ala, strengthened his ties with Jassa Singh Ahluwalia first by receiving the Sikh baptism from him and then by undertaking some joint military campaigns.<sup>26</sup> Raja Sahib Singh had concluded a treaty with the British, but so had the other cis-Sutlej states, including Jind, then ruled by Raja Bhag Singh, a maternal uncle of the mighty Ranjit Singh.<sup>27</sup>

During much of the nineteenth century the princes of Patiala clearly placed their political interests above their commitment to Sikhism. Even within Sikhism itself there was a decline in orthodox practice and an unconscious movement toward reabsorption in Hinduism. The Singh Sabhas arrested these processes, and eventually the ruling house of Patiala began to participate in the network of institutions promoting a revitalized Sikhism and the political interests of Sikhs. Maharaja Rajindar Singh (born 1872, succeeded 1876, died 1900) gained full ruling powers in 1890 and inaugurated significant Patialan involvement in Sikh affairs. He is reputed to have given five thousand rupees to the *Khalsa Bahadur*, an Urdu language Sikh newspaper published at Lahore by Rajinder Singh, a member of the local Singh Sabha.<sup>28</sup> The young Rajindar was also the first Phulkian chief to be approached by a Sikh deputation which was soliciting funds for a Khalsa College eventually to be located in Amritsar. Rajindar responded generously with a contribution to the endowment of one and a half lakhs of rupees, plus Rs 15,000 for buildings. Sardar Partap Singh, the son of Sir Dewa Singh who had headed the minority administration of Rajindar, made a grant in honour of his father, and a longstanding relationship between Patiala and the leading Sikh educational institution was established.<sup>29</sup>

### III

By the beginning of the twentieth century the state of Patiala and its princes had accumulated a mixed record as proponents of Sikhism. Once formally invested with full ruling powers in November 1910 by Lord Minto, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh energetically began to emphasize the positive aspects of his ancestors' commitment to Sikhism and to reinforce them by personal example. He was greatly assisted in his endeavours by the desires and needs of the Sikh community. In order to increase their share of government posts, facilities, and grants, to defend themselves against the challenges of Hindu and Muslim proselytizing movements, and to further their



own efforts to reform Sikhism, the Sikhs required a unified community, symbols of glory and political power, and financial support for their own institutions. They were seeking allies just when Bhupinder was available and anxious to secure a broader sphere for his ambitions. Most Sikhs at this time felt beleaguered and strove for concord, yet they had many different visions of who should lead, how leaders should proceed and what goals should have priority. Thus the ruler of Patiala faced an amazing array of Sikh institutions, factions, and individuals anxious to secure his support and prestige.

Bhupinder responded by playing a variety of roles in both traditional and modern institutions. He functioned as a symbol of past Sikh political power, an arbitrator on doctrine and ritual, a patron of Sikh religious, educational and cultural institutions and activities, a dispenser of political resources, and a conduit to the British raj. The British had traditionally attempted to prevent political connections between the people of British India and the princes. Increasingly, however, the British were led to seek allies in the arena of communal politics. Thus, in order to have a client in a sphere where the British government had no legitimate credentials, some British officials—though certainly not all—were prepared to tolerate, and occasionally to encourage, the participation of the prince from Patiala in Sikh politics. Because Bhupinder was balancing Sikh and British objectives against his own, his policies and actions maintained the traditional ambiguity of the Patiala ruling house toward Sikhism and fostered disparate interpretations of their motivation and impact.

In March 1912, a British criminal intelligence officer disapprovingly noted:

The idea that the Maharaja of Patiala is the head of all Sikhs: both in the States and in British Territory—is being sedulously spread and fostered by the Chief Khalsa Diwan and his assumption of the most overt symbol of royalty [the wearing of a crown on state occasions], without protest on the part of government, may in the present state of Sikh feeling be readily misconstrued and do much mischief.<sup>30</sup>

This assessment reveals two things: the imperial reluctance to allow contacts between princely and British India which might be difficult to control; and the interaction between Sikh communal organizations and Bhupinder's personal ambitions in promoting Patiala as a Sikh leader.

One early example of Sikh references to Patiala's position of

leadership within the *Panth* occurred in late December 1910 when Bhupinder Singh went to Ferozepore in British Punjab for some alligator shooting. While there he received a deputation of Sikhs from that district. Their address traced the rise of the Phulkian house as a sign of the special blessings of the tenth Guru, argued that the Guru blessed the English nation to save India from misrule and tyranny, and then justified the close ties between the Guru's own house, the Phulkian state, and the British nation.<sup>31</sup> This line of reasoning accepted alliances based on expediency if they were successful. In the future Bhupinder Singh would make frequent references in his own speeches to the close association between Guru Govind Singh, the Phulkian house, and the British. A prime example is the one he delivered at a commemorative ceremony held in August 1916 on the anniversary of the declaration of the First World War. On these occasions the Maharaja of Patiala also stressed the martial virtues of the Sikhs which had contributed so much to the defence of the British Empire, and usually asked that the Sikhs be more adequately recognized and rewarded for their support.<sup>32</sup>

After its historical overture, the 1910 Ferozepore memorial asked that the Sikh citizens of Patiala be given greater educational opportunities and representation in the public services of the state. Bhupinder's image as a Sikh leader had multiple consequences, and one was to reinforce the desires of Sikhs within and without his state for greater visibility and a larger share of government patronage. The plea for jobs would be a persistent one which would swell in volume during the 1930s and 1940s as literacy among the Sikhs and a sense of special Sikh identity with Patiala grew.<sup>33</sup> Related to this issue were the frequent demands for a Sikh prime minister and a Sikh majority in any legislative body that might be introduced.<sup>34</sup> The latter request was sidestepped since no legislative body was established in Patiala prior to 1948. It was left to Yadavindar Singh, Bhupinder's son, to appoint the first Sikh prime ministers of Patiala in the twentieth century; even then they were not state subjects. Sir Jogendra Singh, a landowner from Montgomery district who had served Bhupinder Singh as home minister in the early 1910s and had later been minister for agriculture in Punjab, became prime minister for a few months in 1942. He was appointed in March and resigned in July to join the viceroy's Executive Council.<sup>35</sup> Eventually Sardar Hardit Singh Malik, an Oxford-educated Indian Civil

Service officer, became prime minister in April 1944.<sup>36</sup> The demand for a Sikh chief minister was a continuing one and would complicate the post-integration history of Patiala.

In a religion which lacked a papacy or central body authorized to define doctrine, the Sikhs needed some symbolic figures of religious authority as they sought to promote orthodoxy in doctrine and practice. Once again Bhupinder Singh fulfilled a need and thereby enhanced his stature. In 1917 a controversy arose whether the *Rag Mala*, a collection of devotional poems including some by a Muslim, should be separated from the *Adi Granth*. The *Khalsa Advocate*, an English language newspaper devoted to Sikh interests, persistently appealed to Patiala for a decision against the expunction.<sup>37</sup> After the executive committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan had voted against the removal, Bhupinder Singh eventually seconded that judgement. While his ruling did not immediately silence the debate in the Sikh press,<sup>38</sup> his action maintained his right to render opinions in Sikh religious debates.

Financially, the Maharaja of Patiala supported a number of traditional-style projects which tried to reinforce Sikh doctrine and enable more Sikhs to participate in Sikh religious activities. In 1916 he sponsored the publication by his state press of the historical writings of Panth Ratan Gyani Singh. A ninety-five-year-old scholar, Ratan had recorded the events of Sikh history which he had witnessed and had compiled a history of the ten Gurus of Sikhism and the twelve *misals*.<sup>39</sup> Bhupinder also promised, and eventually gave, subsidies to the construction of the flood-protection works around Kartarpur Gurdwara, the first Sikh temple established by Guru Nanak, to the 1923 *kar sewa* at the Golden Temple, and to a gurdwara in London.<sup>40</sup>

In 1908, moreover, just prior to Bhupinder Singh's assumption of powers, there had occurred two significant developments in Sikh educational endeavours in the modern sphere. First, the management of Khalsa College was reorganized to bring it under more direct British official supervision with the commissioner of the Lahore division being the president and the deputy commissioner of Amritsar district the vice president of the managing committee. The object of this arrangement was to insulate the Sikh students at the college from the political unrest then current among their Sikh brethren in the canal colonies.<sup>41</sup> Even so the Maharaja of Patiala remained as a patron of the college and had the right to nominate

two of the seventeen-member managing committee and eleven of the fifty-eight-member college council. Other Sikh princes remained as patrons and nominated proportionally fewer members of each governing body, while Sikhs in the British districts selected only twenty-six members of the college council.<sup>42</sup> The British thus assumed domination, yet maintained the appearance of Sikh participation—a participation, moreover, that was more likely than not to be strongly loyal to the British raj.

Secondly, the Sikh Educational Conference was formed to co-ordinate support for, and stimulate the expansion of, Sikh educational institutions at all levels and in a wider geographical area. Bhupinder Singh slowly moved into this arena of modern patronage and power. The Conference asked him to preside over its fifth session in 1912 at Sialkot, but he declined ostensibly for reasons of health. The more likely reason was that his British overlord was still against princely participation in a conference held in British India.<sup>43</sup> The First World War and the impact of Gandhi's first non-cooperation movement changed attitudes and power relationships. The British were now anxious to secure allies in new political spheres such as communal politics and to strengthen ties with loyalist groups, whether Sikhs or princes. The princes, moreover, became increasingly visible beyond their states. By 1924 the constitution of Khalsa College was revised to return essential control to the Sikhs, and Bhupinder Singh was unanimously elected the first chancellor in 1927.<sup>44</sup> In 1924 Patiala hosted the Sikh Educational Conference and emphasized the importance of acquiring educational qualifications and more seats on constitutional bodies rather than indulging in obstructionist agitation.<sup>45</sup>

#### IV

Though Sikhism did not call for congregational worship or devotional activities, it attempted to instil a strong sense of community and to break down caste barriers among its members. Its gurdwaras or temples where the *Guru Granth Sahib* was enshrined included *langars*, or community dining halls, designed to increase community interaction. Over the centuries the gurdwaras had also acquired endowments from devout Sikhs in the form of land, jewellery, and cash. By the beginning of the twentieth century most gurdwaras were being managed by members of sects, particularly the Udasi, who observed few of the externals of Sikhism, or by appointees of



the Punjab government. As the movement for reform and purification grew within Sikhism, some Sikhs began to demand more orthodox—or possibly more representative—Sikh control over the management and rituals of the gurdwaras. These Sikhs felt frustrated that their holy places were regulated by individuals who did not subscribe to the doctrine of Sikh distinctiveness from Hinduism.<sup>46</sup> Their concern led to the establishment of the Shriomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee.

Two more immediate causes of the movement for gurdwara reform occurred during the political upheaval which followed the First World War in Punjab. In August 1920 some Sikhs took a group of newly baptized untouchable converts to the Golden Temple to offer prayers and to distribute *parshad*, the sacred food of the Sikhs. The priests in charge of the rituals at this centre of Sikhism fled, as did their fellow priests at the adjacent Akal Takht or Throne of God. Those who had organized the entry of the untouchable converts into the Golden Temple declared that the fleeing priests had betrayed the tenets of orthodox Sikhism: equality within the *Panth*. The management of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takht, they claimed, had now passed from the caste-ridden, legal guardians to the Sikh community as a whole.<sup>47</sup> The manager of the Golden Temple was appointed by the British government; thus a change in management would involve the Sikhs in a confrontation with the imperial authority. A second event further inflamed the Sikh sense of hostility. In October 1920 Mahatma Gandhi visited Amritsar, the scene of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in April 1919, to garner Sikh and Punjabi support for his forthcoming campaign of non-cooperation. His presence stimulated the Sikh acceptance of non-cooperation, though not necessarily its non-violent basis, and indirectly served to direct Sikh activity from religious to political objectives.<sup>48</sup>

The British government was anxious to resolve what it deemed the legitimate grievances of the Sikhs, but it wanted to ensure that moderate elements would continue to dominate the heretofore loyal Sikh community. Thus Sir Edward Maclagan, the mild-mannered successor to Sir Michael O'Dwyer as governor of Punjab, sought the advice of Bhupinder Singh of Patiala. They decided to appoint a provisional committee of thirty-six, which would draw up rules for management of gurdwaras and would act as an interim

management.<sup>49</sup> Once this procedure was announced, there was a call for a mass meeting of Sikhs on 16 November 1920 to organize a committee to oversee the introduction of reforms in all gurdwaras. At this meeting the original committee of thirty-six was repudiated because its memberships was selected without consultation with the *Panth*. It was then decided to form the SGPC with 175 members, including representatives from both British districts and Sikh-ruled states. It was also resolved that an elected committee of seventy-two, half of whom would be the thirty-six selected by the governor and the Maharaja, would be entrusted with control of the Golden Temple.<sup>50</sup>

Although Bhupinder Singh later argued that the Sikh-ruled states should appoint at least half of the SGPC, he quickly lost any opportunity to dominate formally. More radical Sikh factions gained control of the SGPC in 1921. These Sikhs were labelled Akalis and frequently were members of the Shiromani Akali Dal, a loosely organized collection of paramilitary units called *jathas* which advocated the forcible seizure of gurdwaras when their managers failed to surrender them voluntarily to the SGPC.<sup>51</sup> Since many of the managers had acquired legal property rights to gurdwara lands, the Akali activity quickly led to a Sikh-British confrontation, for the British were the defenders of law and order.

The Punjab government offered a legal solution by passing the Sikh Gurdwara and Shrines Act in 1922. This compromise measure allowed for committees to manage certain gurdwaras while recognizing and overseeing the rights of the present managers. Passed without Sikh support, this act solved little; the SGPC-Akali agitation continued. During these crucial years, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala quite consciously put himself forward as a mediator among various factions within the *Khalsa* and between the Sikh community and the British raj. He openly attended important Akali meetings and argued for moderation; covertly, he received various SGPC and Akali delegations.<sup>52</sup> While the British were apprehensive about the intervention of an Indian prince in British Indian politics, they knew that there was little they could do to restrain him from such participation.<sup>53</sup> On the Sikh side, there were many aspirants for control of the SGPC and the Akali Dal, and most seemed willing to accept allies and financial support from wherever they could find them.

The Akalis and the SGPC had contacts with both Bhupinder

Singh of Patiala and Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, but the latter has acquired the greater fame as the champion of the Akalis.<sup>54</sup> Ripudaman had developed a pervasive reputation of being staunchly pro-Sikh and increasingly anti-British even before the gurdwara reform movement emerged. While serving on the Imperial Legislative Council from 1906 to 1908, Ripudaman had supported G. K. Gokhale and had been active in promoting the Anand Marriage Bill which would give legal sanction to a simplified form of marriage reputedly introduced by the third Guru.<sup>55</sup> The controversy between Hindus and Sikhs over the validity of this form of marriage was just one aspect of Sikh efforts to promote rituals and doctrines which reinforced their distinctiveness from Hinduism. While the Government of India remained neutral in this controversy, it was definitely antagonized by a disagreement with Ripudaman Singh over the ceremonies involved in his investiture with ruling powers after the death of his father in 1911.<sup>56</sup>

Simultaneously, Ripudaman carried on a running feud with Bhupinder Singh of Patiala. Their rivalry began with their ancestors: the Nabha house, as well as that of Jind, had descended from Tilokha, the eldest son of Phul, while Patiala came from Rama, the second son. It continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as each state sought to enlarge its territories: in the twentieth century, the contest flourished again because of the personal ambition and jealousy of the rulers of Patiala and Nabha. Bhupinder followed the pattern established by his predecessors, Karam Singh and Narindar Singh, of cultivating strong ties with the British overlord. Ripudaman, on the other hand, attempted to find support among those who opposed the British, first in the Imperial Legislative Council and then in Sikh politics. Both princes probably supported Sikh leaders and newspapers which were hostile to the other, but Nabha appeared to have been more blatant in attacks on Patiala.<sup>57</sup> Eventually in 1923 the British appointed Justice Louis Stuart as a one-man commission to investigate charges made by Bhupinder Singh against Ripudaman Singh and his administration. Stuart's report was generally critical of Nabha and called for the payment of damages to Patiala. The ruler of Nabha decided, certainly under tense conditions, to abdicate in order to avoid further inquiries. The British role in this action led the Akalis, who were then looking for a cause, to agitate for the return of Ripudaman Singh to his gaddi.<sup>58</sup>

The Akali espousal of such a political objective split the leadership of the gurdwara reform movement and in some eyes tarnished their reputation as religious reformers. Sir Malcolm Hailey, the astute successor to Maclagan as governor of Punjab, now worked skilfully to enact legislation acceptable to the Sikh community.<sup>59</sup> The Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925 successfully transferred control of the gurdwaras in British India to the 175-member SGPC which would now be elected under governmental sanction and auspices. Hailey also released from prison all Sikh leaders who agreed to sign undertakings that they would implement the new act and would refrain from anti-government activity. In British India the central issues in Sikh politics now were the contest for control of the SGPC and the movement for stronger Sikh representation in provincial and central legislatures.<sup>60</sup>

The Akali political activity during the 1920s had also fostered the establishment of the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal which sought the introduction of representative and responsible government in the princely states of Punjab.<sup>61</sup> Founded on 17 July 1928 at Mansa in Patiala, the Praja Mandal had a majority of Akali leaders and members during its first decade, and spent most of that period in conflict with Maharaja Bhupinder Singh. Its initial goal was to secure the release of Sewa Singh Thikriwala, its president, elected *in absentia*, from Patiala jails. Thikriwala was a Patiala subject who had been arrested in 1923 during the Akali struggle for control of the gurdwaras, had refused to give the required undertaking in 1926 since he thought that the Nabha abdication called for continued agitation, and had been transferred from British jails to the Patiala Central Jail in 1928. Kharak Singh of Jhabbal, a radical Akali who was aligned with Master Tara Singh, had launched a series of religious-political meetings in 1928 and 1929 to secure Sewa's release. He was thwarted, however, by Bhupinder's policy of isolation and by a lack of unified support from the other Akali leaders.<sup>62</sup> Ultimately, a deputation of moderate Sikhs approached the Maharaja on 23 August 1929 and obtained the desired release. By now Bhupinder Singh was anxious to end the agitations, and some Sikhs wanted to regain his co-operation in other areas.<sup>63</sup> Sewa Singh Thikriwala and his supporters remained highly critical of the Maharaja of Patiala and his autocratic administration, and the Patiala issue was just one of many which continued to divide the leadership of the Sikh community.



At this juncture, many Sikh leaders were increasingly concerned about presenting a united Sikh front. Discussions on the next stage of constitutional reform in British India were advancing from the Simon Commission Report to the Nehru Report to the First Round Table Conference. Some Sikhs apparently asked Bhupinder Singh to lead the Sikh delegation to the First Round Table Conference in London. He declined, probably for two reasons. First, some British officials still discouraged such overt princely participation in British Indian politics.<sup>64</sup> Second, he preferred to lead the delegation of his peers in his capacity as chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. The deliberations in London disclosed the dangers of disunity when the apportionment of seats in the future legislatures was debated, and this produced an abortive effort to effect peace between Bhupinder Singh and Master Tara Singh, who was then emerging as his principal Akali antagonist.<sup>65</sup>

These episodes reveal that, even after the Praja Mandal inaugurated its intermittent campaigns against him, the Maharaja of Patiala continued to function as a symbolic figure in Sikh political aspirations and as a mediator between Sikh leaders in British India and British officials. Another incident illustrates his role as intermediary. On 6 May 1930 there was a disturbance near the Sisganj Gurdwara in old Delhi, the site of the execution of Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru. During the attempt to restore order, the police fired on the gurdwara. Afterwards, Bhupinder Singh met with moderate Sikh leaders and then forwarded to Lord Irwin a list of the Sikh demands for moral and material compensation. The viceroy considered these demands unacceptable, but he encouraged Patiala to continue to seek a reconciliation.<sup>66</sup> After several weeks of delicate negotiations, the dispute was eventually resolved when a Sikh delegation led by Sir Sunder Singh Majithia met with Irwin on 30 June 1930 and presented an address to which the British felt able to respond affirmatively.<sup>67</sup> Although several levels of the British hierarchy were eager to use Patiala's contacts and status, they urged him not to lead the Sikhs; he merely introduced the delegation to the viceroy.<sup>68</sup>

## V

During the early 1930s both the British government and the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal sharply challenged the *izzat* (honour) and political authority of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh. The financial

indebtedness of Patiala had grown drastically because of Bhupinder's personal extravagances, his wide-ranging patronage, his frequent trips abroad, and inefficiencies in the state administration.<sup>69</sup> In early 1930 the British advised Bhupinder to appoint a qualified finance minister who would devise a budget that would allow for the repayment of the state debts.<sup>70</sup> For a prince in such difficult financial straits, the British action was relatively mild. Such forbearance probably resulted from Bhupinder's value as a mediator<sup>71</sup> and British reluctance to add to their problems when Gandhi was launching a major civil disobedience campaign.

Almost simultaneously, the All India States' People's Conference appointed an inquiry committee to go to Punjab to gather evidence about allegations of personal corruption, moral turpitude and public maladministration in Patiala which a memorial to Lord Irwin in 1929 first enunciated. *Indictment of Patiala*, the highly denigrating report of the AISPC committee, goaded the Maharaja to request an official inquiry into the charges.<sup>72</sup> The British delegated this task to J. A. O. Fitzpatrick, the Agent to the Governor-General for the Punjab States, who was certainly familiar with the local situation—and had been suggested by Bhupinder Singh. Again the British appeared favourably disposed to the besieged Sikh prince. Fitzpatrick's report generally exonerated the Maharaja but suggested the need for reforms in the judiciary and police departments of the state.<sup>73</sup>

The AISPC and the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal had boycotted the Fitzpatrick inquiry because of its chairman and its choice of sites in Patiala city and Dalhousie, a pleasant but isolated hill station. Throughout 1930 and 1931 the Praja Mandal called for the removal of Bhupinder Singh from his gaddi. Sewa Singh Thikriwala was the dominant figure in this agitation and was re-arrested on 4 November 1930.<sup>74</sup> He was released from the Patiala Central Jail only in March 1931, after a promise by Mandal leaders not to launch anti-Bhupinder boycotts when the Maharaja next sailed for England. Sewa was arrested again in August 1933, and the Praja Mandal agitation against Patiala began to falter without his active participation.<sup>75</sup> His death on 20 January 1935 in Rajindra Hospital at Patiala provoked the celebration of Sewa Singh Thikriwala Day on 17 February 1935 in Amritsar and the appointment by the AISPC of a second Patiala Inquiry Committee. His death also marked the end of one phase of Praja Mandal politics.<sup>76</sup>

From the initial organization of the SGPC, Bhupinder Singh had tried to displace the dominant Akali elements on it. He supported moderate candidates, generally identified with the Chief Khalsa Diwan and increasingly with Gyani Sher Singh, for election to the SGPC, and worked through his state officials like Liaquat Hayat Khan, Arjan Shah Singh, Pindi Dass Sahberwal, and Raghbir Singh, to secure the covert or overt allegiance of Sikh leaders who might otherwise participate in Praja Mandal agitations against him.<sup>77</sup> In September 1933, shortly after Thikriwala again languished in the Patiala Jail, the conflict between the Akali faction of Master Tara Singh and that of Gyani Sher Singh erupted into a more direct confrontation.<sup>78</sup> When the death of Thikriwala removed the principal source of hostility between the Master and the Maharaja, both were ready to effect a rapprochement. They called a truce, the terms of which are not fully known; but Bhupinder's last years were relatively free from hostile agitations, and Tara Singh was able to consolidate his position in Sikh politics.<sup>79</sup>

An incident involving Professor Nirinjan Singh, a professor of chemistry at Khalsa College and the brother of Master Tara Singh, reveals the complex operation, potential extent, and real limitations of the understanding between Tara Singh and the Maharaja. On 17 May 1937 a pamphlet which accused Nirinjan Singh of negotiating an alliance between Patiala and the Akalis was thrown into the compound of Khalsa College. There was a student strike, supported by the Akalis, to protest against what was viewed as an attack on the character of Nirinjan Singh. After reaching a reconciliation with the dissident students, the college appointed a committee of inquiry into the causes of the strike. It dismissed Nirinjan Singh and five other members of the staff for lack of discipline during the incident.<sup>80</sup> Master Tara Singh communicated his strong displeasure to Patiala. The Akali leader saw the incident as an effort by Sunder Singh Majithia, the long-time president of the Khalsa College Council and now the revenue minister in the Unionist government of Punjab, to retaliate against his Akali opponents. Tara Singh closed his message with the stern warning:

In case of no satisfactory solution of the Khalsa College affair, we will consider ourselves free from the understanding with the State. This does not mean necessarily our going into opposition but our hands would be free and our conscience clear.<sup>81</sup>

Patiala acquiesced in the dismissal possibly through the influence of his prime minister, Nawab Liaqat Hayat Khan, who was the brother of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, the Unionist chief minister of Punjab. Bhupinder, however, advised Majithia that he did not think that justice had been distributed equally and withdrew his patronage from Khalsa College until all guilty parties were punished.<sup>82</sup> Bhupinder died on 23 March 1938 and so did not have to worry about the ultimate consequences of this episode.

Bhupinder Singh's long record of involvement with Khalsa College, the Sikh Educational Conference, the SGPC, and the Akali leaders exposes the many complex communal linkages between British Punjab and at least one princely state. These ties were both personal (as in the blood relationship between the Hayat brothers and in the alliances of expediency between Bhupinder and moderate Sikhs, such as Mehtab Singh and Gyani Sher Singh, and even radical Akalis, such as Mangal Singh and Master Tara Singh) and institutional (as in the state representation on the governing boards of the Khalsa College and the SGPC). The princes and the Sikh leaders used these bonds for their mutual political interests and maintained them as long as both sides thought that they received adequate benefits. For Sikhs, these relationships provided a token of past glory and a source of present finance; for Patiala, they enabled an autocratic ruler to forestall Praja Mandal agitations, resist demands for popular participation in government, and move onto a political stage larger than that of his own state.

## VI

For the first time since 1845, an adult son succeeded to the Patiala gaddi upon the death of his father when Yadavindar Singh was invested with full ruling powers on 7 April 1938. Yadavindar had been educated at Aitchison College as had his father, but he had a more diversified apprenticeship which included administrative training, experience as superintendent of police and service as chancellor of Khalsa College, having followed his father in that post in October 1933. Upon his succession Yadavindar faced several critical problems: heavy financial indebtedness which necessitated unpopular retrenchments, a rising protest movement against high revenue rates among tenant agriculturists and small landowners, continuing demands for constitutional reform, and the impending departure of experienced ministers such as Liaqat Hayat Khan,



Pindi Dass Sahberwal, and K. M. Panikkar.<sup>83</sup> The young prince did, however, enjoy a honeymoon period with the Akalis and the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal.<sup>84</sup> He maintained a commission to recommend constitutional reforms which would allow representative government.<sup>85</sup> Master Tara Singh remained on friendly terms with the Patiala ruler, and continued to direct his attention and effort elsewhere. Meanwhile, Yadavindar neutralized one faction of the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal when he married the daughter of its leader, Harchand Singh Jeji, on 9 August 1938. The Praja Mandal was also suffering from a split in its leadership which had occurred after the death of Bhupinder, its principal opponent and negative source of unity. Urban-based Hindu lawyers led by Brish Bhan of Patiala were gradually coming to power in the Mandal, and his faction was interested in positions in government service and constitutional reform.<sup>86</sup>

Yadavindar continued to enhance the image of premier Sikh ruler that his father had so assiduously cultivated. The son like the father was aided by a lack of strong competitors. Nabha, the usual rival, was under minority rule until 1941 when the shy Pratap Singh (born 1919, acknowledged as ruler 1928) was invested with full ruling powers. The grey-bearded princes remained entrenched in Jind and Kapurthala. Yadavindar's only likely challenger was Maharaja Harindar Singh of Faridkot (born 1915, succeeded 1918) who was invested in 1934.

Shortly after his accession to power, Yadavindar faced two crises which enabled him to stand forth as a leader of the Sikh community and to increase the political importance of Patiala state. First, the Second World War precipitated a major break between the Indian National Congress and the British raj and forced the British to seek allies and military support from all possible sources. Though the political situation in India had changed dramatically from 1914, Yadavindar responded to the war much as his father had done earlier. He could thus both reaffirm his commitment as a military ally of his British overlord and his role as leader of the Sikhs. Much of Sikh prestige and prosperity was associated with their hallowed traditions of military prowess, and Yadavindar encouraged Sikhs in general as well as his own subjects in particular, to enlist.<sup>87</sup> When it seemed that the proportion of Sikhs in the British Indian armed forces might be declining, the Maharaja of Patiala took a prominent part in the formation of a Khalsa Defence League which sought to

stimulate recruiting and protect the interests of the enlisted Sikhs.<sup>88</sup>

The second crisis for Sikhs began at the annual session of the Muslim League in Lahore in March 1940 which passed a resolution calling for the creation of a vaguely defined Muslim state called Pakistan. The Pakistan Resolution intensified concern among Sikh leaders about their future, since the resolution posed an unprecedented dilemma for the Sikh community. In their Punjab homeland, Sikhs represented only 14.9 per cent of the population while Muslims were a slight majority at 53.2 per cent, and Hindus were a significant minority at 29.1 per cent.<sup>89</sup> Sikhs were scattered geographically in central Punjab, while the Muslims were dominant in the western districts and Hindus in the eastern districts. Thus an undivided Punjab in Pakistan meant Muslim overlordship; a partitioned Punjab would divide the Sikhs between two states with their most sacred gurdwaras and their richest agricultural lands in the Muslim majority region. As a consequence, Sikhs staunchly supported a united India and vehemently opposed the principle of Pakistan. In 1940, however, some Sikhs began to propose schemes for a Sikh state if Pakistan were conceded. It is difficult to decide whether their proposals were simply bargaining tactics or subtly conceived objectives.

At first, Dr V.S. Bhatti of Ludhiana suggested the establishment of Khalistan, a predominantly Sikh buffer state between India and Pakistan which would include Sikh districts of Punjab, Sikh-ruled princely states, and other adjoining states such as Malerkotla and the Simla Hill States. The Maharaja of Patiala was to head Khalistan and to have a cabinet of representatives from the federating units.<sup>90</sup> It is ironic that the Patiala prince should be considered for such a position just as his state was approaching its demise. After the Cripps Mission in March 1942 made Pakistan appear a constitutional possibility, there was a proposal for an Azad Punjab. This scheme involved redrawing provincial boundaries so that the western Muslim majority districts of Punjab would form a new Muslim majority state, possibly including the Northwest Frontier Province. The reduced Punjab would have no religious community with a majority, and the Sikhs would serve as a balance between equalized Hindu and Muslim communities. Azad Punjab was eventually to incorporate the Sikh-ruled princely states.<sup>91</sup> Another indication of the continuing goodwill between Master Tara Singh and the house of Patiala was the speech of the Akali leader in favour of

Azad Punjab at a conference held at Bhawanigarh in Patiala in March 1943.<sup>92</sup>

During the war years, the demands for a Sikh province or state were usually made in response to some action which appeared to bring Pakistan closer to realization; such demands were not supported by a united front of Sikhs. When C. R. Rajagopalachari, a leader of the Indian National Congress from Madras, advanced a proposal in 1944 which allowed for a Muslim state and a partition of Punjab, there was a renewed call for an independent Sikh state. At the Simla Conference in July 1945, Master Tara Singh still argued against Pakistan, but asked for an independent Sikh state in central Punjab, including Lahore and Amritsar, if Pakistan was conceded.<sup>93</sup> At the meeting of the SGPC on 9 March 1946 several factions within the Sikh community, including representatives of the Sikh-ruled princely states, approved the demand for a separate Sikh state.<sup>94</sup> By this time there were several plans in circulation. Various Akali leaders wanted an amalgamation of Sikh districts of British Punjab with the Sikh-ruled princely states. Yadavindar Singh supposedly called for a Maha-Patiala, and Harindar Singh of Faridkot promoted a union of Sikh states which excluded Patiala, theoretically because the proposed state met his criteria for viability. More likely, however, Harindar wanted to be free from the dominance of Yadavindar.<sup>95</sup>

By May 1947 Pakistan was clearly set to become a reality, and the future political status of the Sikh *Panth* and the formal integration of the princely states into the two successor states of the British raj were only two of many problems to be solved as rapidly as possible. In Punjab, they were intimately related. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who served as both home and states minister in the interim and independent Indian government, made the key decisions which maintained the longstanding linkages between Patiala and the Sikh community. After considering at least four options, Sardar Patel chose to create the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) which included all Sikh-ruled states plus Malerkotla and Nalagarh.<sup>96</sup> He thereby rejected the demand of the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal, Punjabi leaders of his own Congress Party, and a few Akalis to integrate the Sikh-ruled states with the eastern portion of Punjab attached to India. Patel preferred to satisfy Master Tara Singh and to attract the firm allegiance of Yadavindar, the last chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, who was a possible focus for a third force of Indian princes and a Sikh state.<sup>97</sup>

Yadavindar Singh was rewarded for his timely accession with a handsome privy purse, the position as rajpramukh, or governor, of PEPSU, and Patiala city as the capital of the new state. After this show of deference to a prince who was certainly less autocratic than his father but hardly a model of constitutional liberalism, the Congress High Command also rebuffed the Praja Mandal over the issue of the chief ministership. Anxious to promote Sikh attachment to the state of PEPSU and the Indian Union, the Congress leaders from New Delhi accepted Gian Singh Rarewala, a maternal uncle of Yadavindar, as the first chief minister of PEPSU and Raghbir Singh, a minister in the Patiala state government who had long served as an intermediary between Sikh leaders and both Bhupinder and Yadavindar, as Rarewala's successor. Brish Bhan, the Hindu leader of the Praja Mandal in the 1940s, only became the chief minister of PEPSU in 1955 upon the death of Raghbir and shortly before the extinction of the state.<sup>98</sup>

PEPSU did not silence the demand for a Sikh state. In secular India, the movement gradually modified its goal to that of a political unit in which Punjabi written in the Gurmukhi script would be the official language. The agitation over this issue continued after the integration of PEPSU into Punjab in 1956 and despite the evolution of the 'regional formula' which was supposed to ensure equality between Punjabi and Hindi in the newly enlarged state. At various junctures in the agitation for a Punjabi Suba, Yadavindar Singh acted as an intermediary between the Akali leaders and the Congress governments at the centre and the state level. When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi agreed to a Punjabi Suba in 1966, the Maharaja of Patiala again received signs of favour: an uncontested constituency in the 1967 election to the Punjab Legislative Assembly and ambassadorships to Italy and The Netherlands after he retired in disgust from electoral politics.<sup>99</sup> His father might have tried to rally the forces for an independent Sikh state in 1947 or to form a government during the era of ministerial instability in Punjab after the 1967 election, but Yadavindar remained content with the tokens of authority. He lacked the political ambitions and skills of his father.<sup>100</sup> Ironically the new state of Punjab has witnessed the decline of both Akali political power and that of the house of Patiala. The Congress Party quickly became dominant, and even Maharani Mohinder Kaur, the wife Yadavindar married in 1938, lost her seat in Parliament in the 1971 election after serving there since 1964.



## VII

The ambivalent relationship between the ruling house of Patiala and the Sikh community reflected the chaotic conditions of eighteenth-century Punjab when there existed a vacuum of imperial authority. One needed the other. The ruling house of Patiala used its military resources to expand its territorial boundaries and then relied upon its religious ties to Sikhism to legitimize its conquests. In turn, Sikhism remained visible through its association with political power. In the confrontation between Ranjit Singh and the British East India Company, Patiala benefited from its geographical position south of the Sutlej and became a buffer state between two expanding powers. During the early nineteenth century when the imperial balance of power was stabilized between Lahore and Calcutta, Patiala and the Sikh community went their separate ways, as they did after 1848 when British dominance in Punjab was unchallenged.

It was during the twentieth century—as in the eighteenth century—when the imperial authority began to wane, that the house of Patiala and the Sikh community rediscovered each other. They both wanted not only to survive in a changed political configuration, but to expand their power base at a time when power was being redistributed. Bhupinder Singh knew his Sikh heritage and understood how to exploit it. Sikh leaders, ranging from Sunder Singh Majithia to Gyani Sher Singh to Mehtab Singh to Master Tara Singh, were willing to enter alliances to ensure their own power and the future existence of the Sikh community. These Sikhs were able to gain legal recognition of their control over the gurdwaras and even after the British withdrawal, the SGPC ensured the political survival of the Sikhs. After 1940, the Sikh community faced the prospect of being divided between two states, and Patiala faced political extinction. The Maharaja and the community then drew closer, and through PEPSU, both managed to survive.

The relationship between the ruling house of Patiala and the Sikh *Panth* was just one of many which had existed before the arrival of the British and would survive their departure. It was also one among many factors which made the boundaries between British India and princely India far less rigid in reality than they appeared to be in treaties and on maps. Developments within the Sikh community affected the population as well as the ruler of Patiala. As Patialan Sikhs became more aware of their separate identity and increased in

numbers, they began to petition their Sikh Maharaja for a greater portion of services and jobs. Those longstanding pleas would eventually affect the selection of chief ministers for PEPSU after 1947. The Sikh ruler and subjects of Patiala in turn supported the growth of Sikh institutions in British India and provided human and material resources for Sikh organizations all across the political spectrum, from conservative to radical. The bonds of religious affiliation were fostering the integration of British and princely India long before that integration was formally ratified in the late 1940s.

### NOTES

1. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, 2 vols., Princeton, 1963-6, II, p. 207. Note by V.W. Smith, Superintendent of Police, Criminal Investigation Department, Punjab, p. 11, NAI, H.Poll, 459-II/July 1921-December 1922, and India Office Records, 1/JP/6/1734, JP 2245/1922, linked with JP 1220/1921.
2. *Tribune* (Lahore), 21 June 1923, p. 8.
3. See below, and Barbara N. Ramusack, 'Incident at Nabha: Interaction between Indian States and British Indian Politics', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVIII, 3, May 1969, pp. 563-77.
4. Punjab State Archives at Patiala [PSAP], Patiala State Records [PSR], Ijlas-i-Khas [IK]. Basta No. 155, File 256, and NAI, H. Poll, B, September 1910, Pro. No. 6. For critical commentary see the *Tribune*, 20 October 1909, p. 1; 31 October 1909, pp. 1 and 6; 1 December 1909, p. 1; 19 December 1909, p. 1; 22 December 1909, p. 5; 22 January 1910, p. 19; 2 February 1910, p. 1; 22 February 1910, p. 1; 18 March 1910, p. 1. Though founded by a Sikh, the *Tribune*, which was the leading Indian-owned English daily in Punjab, was now Bengali-edited and usually pro-Hindu.
5. For criticism of political repression see *Siyasat* (Lahore), 25 November 1920, in *Punjab Press Abstracts* [PPA], 4 December 1920, p. 491, and *Partap*, 10 December 1920, PPA, 18 December 1920, p. 507; of the Patiala police, see *Hindustan* (Lahore), 15 January 1909, PPA, 30 January 1909, p. 109; for pleas for judicial reform, *Tribune*, 21 June 1911, p. 1, *Panjabee*, 23 March 1919, PPA, 29 March 1919, p. 128; for budget reform, *Tribune*, 29 March 1922, p. 5.
6. In 1903 Major F. Popham Young revived the system of panchayats as instruments for the settlement of local disputes without recourse to the more formal state courts. *Tribune*, 7 December 1906, p. 2. For a later assessment, 'Annual Report on Patiala for 1909-10' by Lt. Col. C.M. Dallas, Political Agent for Phulkian States and Bahawalpur, NAI, Punjab Government Civil Secretariat [PGCS], B (No. 94/103), 1910, 151/July 1910. For other social and political reforms, see *Tribune*, 17 February 1910, p. 1; 9 March 1910, p. 4; 13 April 1910, p. 1; 27 May 1910, p. 1.

7. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, II, pp. 119–67, and N. General Barrier, 'The Sikh Resurgence: The Period and Its Literature' in *The Sikhs and Their Literature: A Guide to Books, Tracts & Periodicals (1849–1919)*, Delhi, 1970, pp. xvii–xlv.
8. Ibid., and Kenneth W. Jones, 'Ham Hindu Nahin: Arya-Sikh Relations 1877–1905', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXII, 3, May 1973, pp. 457–75.
9. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, I, pp. 17–48; W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford, 1968, especially pp. 148–226; J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Chandigarh, 1969.
10. For contemporary accounts see *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, with an introduction by Ruchi Ram Sahni, n.p., 1922, and Note by D. Petrie, Asst. Director, CID, 11 August 1911, reprinted in *Gurdwara Gazette*, April 1969.
11. For a succinct analysis of the increase in Sikhs from 1881 to 1931, see *Census of India, 1931*, XVII, *Punjab*, Part I, pp. 304–7. It should be noted that from the 1911 census the definition of a Sikh was changed from one who wears the hair long and refrains from smoking to a definition that allowed each person to register as he or she wished. *Census of India, 1911* XIV, *Punjab*, Part I, pp. 154–5.
12. *Census of India, 1941*, I, *India*, Part I, *Tales*, pp. 9, 23–6, and VI, *Punjab*, *Tables*, pp. 48–9. This census was greatly reduced in scope because of wartime conditions. For the first time, respondents were asked not their 'religion' but their 'community'.
13. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, I, p. 133.
14. A.H. Bingley, *Sikhs*, Patiala, reprint, 1970, p. 40. Bingley also claimed that the Malwa Sikh was lax in his observance of Sikh rituals and differed only in degree from his orthodox Hindu neighbour, p. 78. See also Joseph Davey Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs: From the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Sutej*, Delhi, reprint, 1966, pp. 96–8.
15. There is no general history of Patiala, but the basic details are outlined in Lepel H. Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab: Being the History of the Principal States in the Punjab and their Political Relations with the British Government*, Patiala, reprint, 1970, especially pp. 24, 19–123, 183–97. Cunningham argued that Ahmad Shah may have shown favour to Ala Singh in order to widen the difference between Malwa and Manjha Sikhs. *History of the Sikhs*, p. 92.
16. Note by D. Petrie, 11 August 1911, op. cit.
17. Ibid., and [Ganda Singh], *A History of the Khalsa College Amritsar*, Amritsar, 1949, pp. 15, 52–62.
18. Fauja Singh Bajwa, *Kuka Movement: An Important Phase in Punjab's Role in India's Struggle for Freedom*, Delhi, 1965, pp. 82–3, 89, 92–3, 102–3, 106, 109–10.
19. For further information on the administrative structure in Patiala see *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Provincial Series, *Punjab*, II, Calcutta, 1908, pp. 292–4; the annual reports submitted by the Political Agent for the Phulkian States to the government of Punjab from 1909 to 1921 in the NAI, PGCS and the *Administrative Report of Patiala 1977 (1920–1921 A.D.)*, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 7, File 105 and the *Annual Administration Report for the Year 1986*

(1929–1930 A.D.), Patiala, n.d. Bhupinder Singh published only these two administrative reports, and after 1921 when immediate jurisdiction over Patiala was transferred from the Punjab government to the Government of India, there were no annual reports from the Agent to the Governor-General for the Punjab States [AGGPS].

20. Typical of the protests against the employment of individuals from outside the state was that mounted against the employment of Khan Zulfiqar Ali Khan as chief secretary in 1911. *Tribune*, 24 February 1911, p. 1; 25 February 1911, p. 1; 28 February 1911, p. 5. For a later more general protest see Resolution 'Five, Punjab States Peoples Conference, Ludhiana, 12 October 1930, NAI, H. Poll, 100/1931.
21. The Sayyid family had long been associated with the Patiala ruling house. See *Punjab State Gazetteers. Phulkian States: Patiala, Jind & Nabha*, Lahore, 1909, p. 74.
22. This summary is based on Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*.
23. A facsimile of this letter and partial translation is in 'How I became Head of the Sikhs—From the Maharaja's [Yadavindar Singh] Memoirs', *The Sikh Sansar*, III, 4, December 1974, pp. 125–8.
24. Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, pp. 24–5.
25. Ibid., and Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 92–3.
26. Amar Singh also received support in a succession dispute from the rulers of Jind and Nabha, Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, pp. 30–1.
27. Ibid., pp. 94–122 for Patiala, and pp. 293–306 for Jind.
28. N. Gerald Barrier and Paul Wallace, *The Punjab Press, 1880–1902*, South Asian Series, Occasional Paper, No. 14, East Lansing, Michigan, 1970, pp. 73–4.
29. [Ganda Singh], *History of Khalsa College*, pp. 14–15.
30. D. Petrie, Note, 13 March 1912, GOI, Foreign Department, Internal-A, Confidential-B, 1913, No. 6, IOR, Crown Representative Collection [CR], R 1/22/78.
31. Copies of the speech are in *Tribune*, 3 January 1911, p. 5, and *Khalsa Advocate*, 6 January 1911, p. 5. There is favourable commentary in the latter on p. 3. The *Khalsa Advocate* was the leading Sikh-edited English daily of Punjab and was based in Lahore.
32. *Tribune*, 5 August 1916, p. 4 and 17 August 1916, p. 2.
33. For the sense of Sikh identity see *Khalsa Advocate*, 6 January 1911, p. 3, and for pleas for jobs for Sikhs, 3 March 1917, p. 1; also *Punjab Darpan*, 20 February 1918, *PPA*, 2 March 1918, p. 123. Achhara Singh, President of the Patiala Subjects Association to Maharaja Yadavindar Singh, 30 April 1939, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 172, File 2049 and the resolution of the Bhawanigarh Dharmic Conference, 13 October 1940, in Talia Mohammad Khan, Inspector General of Police to Yadavindar, 13 October 1940, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 178, File 2169. The conference was permitted in Patiala because it was supposedly purely dharmic and therefore religious in scope.
34. In January 1938 Maharaja Bhupinder Singh appointed a committee on constitutional reforms. It was chaired by Liaquat Hayat Khan, the prime minister, and included Hari Kishan Kaul, revenue minister, K.M. Panikkar,



foreign minister, M.N. Raina, law minister, Ajmer Singh, accountant-general; C.V. Dickens, finance minister, and Mir Maqbul Mahmud were added at the request of the other committee members. The committee received petitions from more than twenty Sikh groups in both Patiala state and Punjab province asking for a Sikh prime minister and sixty per cent of the seats in a legislative assembly. The Sikh population of the state was approaching forty-five per cent. These petitions are in PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 173, File 2073-II and III. A more personal plea for a Sikh legislative majority came from Jogendra Singh to Maharaja Yadavindar Singh, 11 April 1939, *ibid.*, File 2073-I.

35. The appointment was made on 19 March 1942, and Patiala received telegrams of appreciation from the Sikh All Parties Committee, Lahore, signed by Baldev Singh, and from Niringan Singh, principal of the Sikh National College in Lahore and brother of Master Tara Singh. PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 51, File 781. After his resignation, there was continuing pressure for another Sikh prime minister. M.N. Raina to Tej Bahadur Sapru, 3 July 1942, National Library of India, Calcutta, Sapru Manuscripts, Series II, Unbound, R 24, and Sapru to Raina, 15 July 1942, Series III, Unbound, File R.
36. Sardar Malik had served as trade commissioner for India in New York from 1938 to 1944 and after independence was the first Indian ambassador to France. For further biographical data, see *Civil List of Gazetted Officers of the Patiala State*, Patiala, 1946, *The India Office and Burma Office List, 1945*, London, 1945, p. 263, and 'Portrait of a Sardarni', *Sikh Sansar*, V, March 1976, pp. 5-7.
37. *Khalsa Advocate*, 30 June 1917, p. 3; 22 September 1917, p. 1; 8 December 1917, p. 1; 23 February 1918, p. 1.
38. Fortnightly report from the Punjab government for the first half of August 1918, NAI, H. Poll, 40/September 1918.
39. *Tribune*, 17 October 1916, p. 5.
40. For the Kartarpur gift, see *Khalsa Advocate*, 23 December 1919, p. 1. For the difficulties encountered in collecting these grants, see the report of an interview between representatives of the SGPC headed by Mehtab Singh, and Maharaja Bhupinder Singh on 16 February 1925 in *Some Confidential Papers of the Akali Movement*, edited by Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1965, pp. 215-18 and *Tribune*, 11 April 1926, p. 9.
41. Note by D. Petrie, 11 August 1911, *Gurdwara Gazette*, and [Ganda Singh], *A History of the Khalsa College*, pp. 67-70.
42. Revised Rules for Management of the Khalsa College', signed by R.E. Younghusband, President, and Sunder Singh Majithia, Honorary Secretary, Khalsa College Council, 22 June 1908. I am grateful to Dr Ganda Singh of Patiala for sharing his personal copy of these rules with me. For a contemporary account which is highly critical of this reorganization, see Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Autobiography*, edited and annotated by Ganda Singh, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 199-205.
43. Charles R. Cleveland, Director, CID, GOI, to A. Henry McMahon, Secretary, Foreign Dept, GOI, 11 March 1912, IOR, CR, R 1/22/78.
44. For a general survey, see [Ganda Singh], *History of the Khalsa College*, pp. 92-7, 101. For the government willingness to transfer control, see fortnightly

- report from Punjab for the first half of November 1920, NAI, GOI, H. Poll, 74/December 1920; Proceedings of the Governor of the Punjab in Council in the Home Department, No. 15150, 6 May 1922, IOR, Punjab Home Dept. Pro, Part A, File 23, in vol. 11277; *Tribune*, 16 November 1920, p. 2. For the election of Patiala, see *Tribune*, 25 June 1927, p. 4.
45. Note by Arjan Shah Singh, 8 January 1924, and Daya Kishan Kaul, Prime Minister, to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, 10 January 1924, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 24, File 355.
  46. For a contemporary account by a member of the Brahmo Samaj of the gurdwara movement, see Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines*, edited by Ganda Singh, Amritsar, n.d., especially pp. 60–73.
  47. *Ibid.*, pp. 61–2.
  48. Judith Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power*, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 283–4 and 325–6.
  49. Fortnightly report from Punjab for the first half of November 1920, NAI, GOI, H. Poll, 74/December 1920, and *Khalsa Advocate*, 16 October 1920, pp. 5–6.
  50. V.W. Smith, 'The Akali Dal and The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, 1921–1922', IOR, L/JP/6/1734.
  51. *Ibid.*, has an excellent analysis of the origins, activities, membership, and structure of the SGPC and the Akali Dal. The SGPC is characterized as urban-based and dominated by Khatri and Arora Sikhs in the professions, while the Akali Dal is said to be rural-based and largely composed of Jat agriculturists.
  52. See the fortnightly reports for 1922 from A.B. Minchin, AGGPS, to J.P. Thompson, Chief Secretary to the Punjab government, especially those for January and February, and a note on Patiala's visit to Amritsar on 8 December 1922 attached to the December reports in GOI. F & P. Internal Secret, 583/1923, IOR, CR, R 1/18/53.
  53. H.D. Craik, Home Dept, GOI, to E. Joseph, Chief Secretary, Punjab government, 27 January 1922, IOR, CR R 1/29/53.
  54. Patiala and British official sources argue that Nabha's reputation was largely acquired through financial support of Akali and non-Akali politicians and newspapers. See the fortnightly reports for 1922 from the Punjab States in IOR, CR, R 1/18/53.
  55. K.S. Talwar, 'The Anand Marriage Act', *The Panjab Past and Present*, II, October 1968, pp. 400–10.
  56. There is extensive correspondence over the succession dispute. IOR, CR, R 1/19/513 and R 1/19/602.
  57. See the fortnightly reports for 1922 from the Punjab States in IOR, CR, R 1/18/53.
  58. See *ibid.*; Ramusack, 'Incident at Nabha'; Harbans Singh, 'Maharaja Ripudaman—His Involvement in Popular Causes', *The Panjab Past and Present*, IV, October 1970; and Mohinder Singh, 'Akali Involvement in the Nabha Affair', *The Panjab Past and Present*, V, October 1971.
  59. Hailey's assessment of the Sikh situation and his strategy to defuse it are cogently outlined in a 'Memorandum by Sir Malcolm Hailey on the Akali Situation', 20 June 1924, IOR, Hailey Papers, MSS Eur E 220/6A.

60. 'The S.G.P.C. has for some time been developing strong internal differences, partly on personal and partly on sectional lines. The Jats under the Chhabal [*sic*] Bros. has been intriguing for power against the Katri [*sic*] and Arora sections, of whom Mehtab Singh is the leader . . . . The Malwa and Manjha sections are also strongly at variance'. Hailey to Alexander Muddiman, Home Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 29 January 1926, IOR, MSS Eur E 220/9A and also 28 August 1926, *ibid.*, E 220/9C. On the issue of Sikh representation in the legislatures, see the report on the annual session of the Sikh League on 22 October 1928 which ended 'amidst confusion' after debating the Nehru Report. *Indian Quarterly Register*, II, July–December 1928, pp. 432–3; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, II, pp. 226–35 and Kailash Chander Gulati, *The Akalis Past and Present*, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 35–71.
61. Romesh Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement in East Punjab States*, Patiala, 1972, especially pp. 47–8.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–75 and 'A Secret Note on the Akali Agitation in Patiala, January–February 1929', PSAP, PSR, Prime Minister's Office [PMO], Basta No. 20, Serial No. 558. For an example of Patiala's efforts to seek allies among past and present Akali leaders, see Pindi Dass Sahberwal, Minister for Law and Justice, to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, 28 January 1929, PSAP, PSR, PMO, Basta No. 18, Serial 546, File 228/1928; and Note by Pindi Dass, 28 March 1929, *ibid.*, Basta No. 19, Serial No. 581, File 229/1929. The *Tribune* covered the agitation in depth as did the fortnightly reports from J.A.O. Fitzpatrick, AGGPS. See IOR, CR, R 1/29/444.
63. Two examples are Jogendra Singh, *Tribune*, 9 February 1929, p. 7, and Ujjal Singh, *Tribune*, 28 July 1929, p. 5.
64. Fitzpatrick to H. Wilberforce-Bell, Officiating Political Secretary, GOI, 4 August 1930, IOR, CR, R 1/29/649.
65. C.C. Garbett, Chief Secretary, Punjab government, to C.C. Watson, Political Secretary, GOI, 6 June 1931, IOR, CR, R 1/29/669. Garbett claimed that negotiations were suspended when Ripudaman Singh called Master Tara Singh to Kodaikanal and asked that his re-instatement be a condition of any compromise. Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement*, pp. 124–5 has a reference to an earlier effort at compromise in 1928–9.
66. Irwin to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, 29 May 1930, and Bhupinder to Irwin, 4 June 1930, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 65, File 994.
67. The address is in *ibid.*
68. Irwin, Fitzpatrick, and moderate Sikh leaders all urged Patiala to continue his efforts. See Irwin to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, 19 June 1930, Fitzpatrick to Patiala, 30 May 1930 and 19 June 1930 and a telegram from some Sikh leaders to Patiala, 16 May 1930, *ibid.*
69. Fitzpatrick argued that the Chamber of Princes took advantage of Patiala's generosity. Fitzpatrick to Watson, 18 January 1939, IOR, CR, R 1/29/448.
70. For an internal statement of the financial problems, see Chiranji Lal, Accountant-General, Patiala, to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, 9 June 1929, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 95, File 1377. For correspondence on the appointment of Sir Frederic Gauntlett, who had just retired as Comptroller

- and Auditor-General of the GOI, as finance minister and some of the problems raised, see Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India [SSI], to Irwin, 5 March 1930 and Irwin to Wedgwood Benn, 3 April 1930, IOR, Halifax Papers, MSS Eur C 152/6.
71. On 31 December 1929 Wilberforce-Bell, then Officiating Deputy-Secretary, Political Department, noted, 'We cannot afford to see a state of importance & position of Patiala crack . . .'. IOR, CR, R 1/29/509.
  72. *Indictment of Patiala: Being a Report of the Patiala Enquiry Committee Appointed by the Indian States' People's Conference*, Bombay, 1930. For comments on Patiala's request, see *Tribune*, 13 May 1930, p. 8 and 10 June 1930, p. 7.
  73. The Fitzpatrick Report, 11 July 1930 is in IOR, CR, R 1/29/545 (O).
  74. Thikriwala was rearrested specifically for his speech at the meeting of the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal at Ludhiana on 11 October 1930. *Tribune*, 12 November 1930, p. 4 and 23 November 1930, p. 4. For a copy of his speech, see NAI, GOI, H. Poll, 100/1931.
  75. Fortnightly report from Punjab for the first half of November 1933, NAI, GOI, H. Poll, 18/13/1933.
  76. Fortnightly report from Punjab for the second half of February 1935 and the first half of March 1935, NAI, GOI, H. Poll, 18/2/1935, and Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement*, pp. 103-22.
  77. Liaqat Hayat Khan, Home Minister, Patiala, to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, 16 October 1928, and Pindi Dass to Patiala, 29 August 1928 and 28 January 1929 in PSAP, PSR, PMO, Basta No. 18, Serial 546, 228/1928 and Raghbir Singh, Inspector General of Police and Deputy Revenue Minister, Patiala, to Liaqat Hayat Khan, 27 August 1937, *ibid.*, IK, Basta No. 172, File 2055-I.
  78. Fortnightly report from Punjab for the second half of September 1933, NAI, GOI, H. Poll, 18/10/1933 and for the first half of February 1935 and the first half of May 1935.
  79. Fortnightly report from Punjab States for the second half of January 1935, IOR, CR, R 1/29/1416, and Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement*, pp. 123-8.
  80. [Ganda Singh], *History of the Khalsa College*, pp. 116-22.
  81. Message from Master Tara Singh, 11 August 1937, received by Raghbir Singh through Gurdit Singh and forwarded to Liaqat Hayat Khan, Prime Minister, Patiala, on 27 August 1937, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 172, File 2055-I.
  82. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh to Sunder Singh Majithia, 26 September 1937, *ibid.*
  83. C.P. Skrine, Resident for Punjab States, to Maharaja Yadavindar Singh, 11 June 1939, and 1 July 1939, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 177, File 2153, and Skrine to his mother, 11 June 1939, IOR, Skrine Papers, MSS Eur F 154/24.
  84. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, President, All Indian States' People's Conference to Maharaja Yadavindar Singh, 20 April 1938, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 177, Serial 2141.
  85. The report from the committee on constitutional reforms, 20 March 1939, advocated substantial reforms but was never implemented. PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 173, File 2073-I.



86. Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement*, pp. 134–40, 147–52.
87. Sunder Singh Majithia to Maharaja Yadavindar Singh, 11 September 1939 and 2 October 1939, PSAP, PSR, IK, Basta No. 87, File 1279.
88. Beant Singh, Lahore, to Private Secretary to Maharaja Yadavindar Singh, 7 January 1941, memorial of delegation to Yadavindar on 18 January 1941, report of public meeting at Lahore on 19 January 1941, *ibid.*, Basta No. 89, File 1289.
89. *Census of India, 1941*, VI, *Punjab, Tables*, pp. 48–9.
90. Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, p. 88, and *Tribune*, 21 May 1940 and 29 May 1940 in *ibid.*, p. 213.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 89–109 and Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, Princeton, 1966, pp. 82–5.
92. Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement*, pp. 157–8, and Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, pp. 95–6.
93. Minutes of the final meeting of the Simla Conference, 14 July 1945, and Wavell to Amery, 14 July 1945, in Nicholas Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power, 1942–7*, V, *The Simla Conference*, London, 1974, Documents 603–4, and Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, pp. 111–12.
94. Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, p. 121.
95. Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement*, pp. 188–91 and Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, II, p. 291.
96. V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, London, 1956, pp. 240–4.
97. Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement*, p. 191; Ganda Singh, 'The Role of Patiala in the Integration of India', *The Panjab Past and Present*, II, April 1968, pp. 147–59; and Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, Bombay, 1951, pp. 137–8, 237–8, 267.
98. Raghbir Singh had been considered for the prime ministership of Patiala as early as 1942 when Jogendra Singh resigned. See Raina to Sapru, 3 July 1942, Sapru MSS, II, R 24. Also see Walia, *Praja Mandal Movement*, pp. 192–9 and Barbara N. Ramusack, 'Patiala and East Punjab States Union', *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Harbans Singh, ed., Patiala, forthcoming.
99. I am most grateful to William L. Richter for giving me access to his notes from an interview with Yadavindar Singh, 25 April 1970, in which the former Maharaja of Patiala discussed his political career in detail.
100. Major-General T.W. 'Pete' Rees, commander of the Punjab Boundary Force observed: 'H. H. Patiala . . . has not got the ability to organize such a show as the Sikh State.' Quoted in Robin Jeffrey, 'The Punjab Boundary Force and the Problem of Order: August 1947', *Modern Asian Studies*, VIII, 1974, p. 507.

# 6

## MEWAR The Breakdown of the Princely Order

RAJAT K. RAY

Some recent studies of political change in British India have regarded the development of nationalist organization as the conditioned response to the external stimuli of British administrative and constitutional experiments.<sup>1</sup> British rule is viewed as a dynamic factor in the transformation of society. By promoting administrative and constitutional reforms, and by spreading western education and new forms of economic activity, the raj appears as the instrument of political modernization. By contrast, the 'traditional order' in the princely states, which achieves integration through ritualized relationships binding together rulers and subjects, appears to have built-in self-perpetuating mechanisms.

Implicit in this is the idea that if the British had not attempted various 'modernizing' activities, they would not have fostered the modern political opposition that undermined their rule in the long run. In short, what would have happened if a ruler had deliberately made the decision to govern with authority and to change nothing? The answer, at least as suggested by the case of Mewar which is the subject of this chapter, appears to be that no amount of temporizing would have preserved even a highly traditional rulership indefinitely. Rural superordinate relationships, which necessarily form the bedrock of such politics, appear to be of considerable explosive potential. The balance between social forces in a highly ritualized traditional rulership depends on conditions that may be upset without the introduction of external factors. In Mewar, though it was a backward state by all measurable standards of physical 'modernization', there were deep stirrings within agrarian society that were the product of a causal process that had its own peculiar line of development. This line of development must be distinguished carefully from the new inputs of British rule that stimulated the formal political organization of town-bred nationalism.

The initial step is to locate and study a princely state which did not receive any significant amount of the inputs that are held to have transformed the situation in British India. Not all native states, of course, were enshrouded in those changeless conditions that were supposed to throw into bright relief the progress in British India. Some states had extensive bureaucracies and vigorous modernizing programmes, as other chapters in this book show. Moreover, few among the princely states were really representative of a traditional order of any antiquity; many had mushroomed promiscuously in the anarchy of the eighteenth century.

In view of these difficulties, the ancient state of Mewar in Rajputana has been chosen for the purposes of this study as most amply fulfilling the requirements of analysis defined above. The Sesodia Maharanas of Udaipur, who had a universally recognized claim to the highest rank and dignity among the Rajput princes of India, traced back their descent to the legendary founder of their state, Bappa Rawal, who took Chittor from the Paramar clan of the Rajputs in A.D. 734.<sup>2</sup> Thrice during the course of Muhammadan rule over India, the fortress of Chittor was sacked by Muslim invaders (by Alauddin Khalji in 1303, by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat in 1534 and by Akbar in 1567), on each occasion the Rajputs perishing in battle and their women immolating themselves in fire to avoid dishonour. Apart from the Bhatias of Jaisalmer, the Sesodias of Mewar were the only dynasty among the Rajput clans that outlived six centuries of Turkish domination in the same ancestral lands where their forefathers had staked out a claim before the coming of the Muslims. The Maharanas of Mewar, who proudly maintained the purity of their stock by refusing to follow the other princes of Rajputana who gave their daughters in marriage to the Mughal, claimed recognition as the Sun of the Hindu Race. Even in the hey-day of Mughal rule, the Sesodias, while admitting the nominal suzerainty of the Emperors of Delhi, maintained intact their practically independent rule in Mewar. Better than any other Rajput dominion, Sesodia rule exhibited the ancient and uncorrupted condition of Hindu polity, practically unchanged by Mughal interference.

In the first half of the twentieth century Mewar also exhibited a remarkable backwardness—in British terms—in its political and economic conditions. It had experienced few of the new inputs that had forced the pace of change in princely states like Mysore or

Travancore. Maharana Fateh Singh, who ruled over Mewar from 1884 to 1921, was a deeply conservative prince who sought, as far as possible within the limitations of treaty relations with the British, to maintain Mewar's ancient tradition. Nor was his resignation in 1921 followed by any significant liberalization. Until the coming of independence, the Udaipur state made no arrangement for constitutional association of the representatives of the people with the processes of administration, except in the restricted sphere of the Udaipur municipality. In 1946 Mohanlal Sukhadia, a future chief minister of Rajasthan, was complaining: 'Mewar is the premier state of Rajputana, but in regard to constitutional development it is perhaps the most backward.'<sup>3</sup> The development of political organization on nationalist lines had also been late and stunted. Until a Praja Mandal was finally organized in the state in 1938, political agitations in Mewar were largely directed by nationalist organizations based on the British territory of Ajmer.

Yet for all this Mewar was by no means free from political unrest. In fact Mewar led the rest of Rajputana in rural unrest of a type that threatened the whole structure of princely authority. The growing connection between these agrarian disturbances and the nationalist agitation directed from Ajmer presented a menace that seriously alarmed the British. All this happened in the most backward parts of a backward traditional state, where no administrative reform or constitutional progress had defined a spacious arena for the mobilization of political resources by nationalist organizations.

### *The Traditional Structure of the Udaipur State*

The aboriginal inhabitants of Mewar, from whom the Rajput clans took the country, were the Bhils and the Minas. These tribals still formed the bulk of the population in the south-west region of Mewar, which formed a rugged country covered with rocks, hills and dense jungles. It was in this part of the country that the Guhilot clan (later called Sesodia) settled originally, before by slow degrees they conquered the plains, including the fortress of Chittor. The bardic chronicles are full of violent clashes between Bhil and Rajput in early times. In the mountain fastnesses the Bhil society remained largely intact, and periodically there were violent outbreaks among the Bhils which severely tested the resources of the Udaipur state down to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the plains many of the original possessors of the soil seem to have been Jats, who



with Gujars, Gadris, Dangis, Dhakars and Malis formed the bulk of the peasantry of the state. Below these peasants, enjoying the presumptive right of *Bapota* (patrimony) in the soil, were the untouchable castes, such as the Balais, Chamars and Chakars, who were mostly village servants, agricultural labourers and performers of menial services. The *mahajan* classes (Oşwal and Maheśri) and the Brahmins and Kayasthas, while extensively engaged in agriculture, formed the main element of the population of the towns, and dominated the various offices of state requiring literacy, as well as the trading and credit networks in town and country. Over them all ruled the Rajput clans, which formed roughly ten per cent of the population of the state.

It was on the power exercised over the countryside by the Rajput clans, and on the highly ritualized relationships that bound these clans to the ruling dynasty at Udaipur, that the seemingly indestructible Guhilot-Sesodia rule over Mewar for twelve centuries rested. Through the centuries the descendants of Gohil, the ancestor of the clan who settled in the hilly tract of south-west Mewar about the middle of the sixth century, spread out over the land. As the kinsmen of the ruling family colonized the country in this manner, the hold of the dynasty over the country was strengthened, for the Rana (earlier called Rawal) remained the head of the clan and was addressed as Bapji by every Sesodia Rajput. In course of the dispersion, the clan was divided into various lineages, of which the most important were the Ranawats, the Chundawats and the Shaktawats. The Ranawats, who were all those families (except the Shaktawats) descended directly from Rana Udai Singh I or any subsequent Rana, included the ruling dynasty. The Chundawats, who were descendants of Chunda (the eldest son of Rana Lakha who in 1397 surrendered the right of succession to his younger brother Mokul), and the Shaktawats, who formed the progeny of Shakta Singh (brother of Rana Pratap Singh), were keen and fierce rivals for power and dominance in the inner council of the Maharanas, though of course debarred from any claim to the throne itself (which was confined to the Karjari, Sivradi, Nitawal and Piladhar families of the Ranawat lineage).<sup>4</sup> If the Sesodia lineages, which formed the most numerous element in the Rajput population of the state, were directly connected to the house of Udaipur by blood ties, there were also substantial ties that bound the other Rajput clans to the ruling dynasty. As kinsmen the Sesodia lineages tended to be violent,

jealous and competitive in the presence of the Maharanas, especially on account of the unremitting rivalry for power between the Chundawat and Shaktawat lineages. To counterbalance these jealous kinsmen, the Maharanas relied on the loyal servants of the throne supplied by the other clans, especially the Jhalas (who supplied the premier noble of the state in the person of the Raja of Bari Sadri), the Chauhans (who supplied the second and the third in rank, i.e. the Rao of Bedla and the Rawat of Kotharia), the Paramars and the Rahors, all of whom figured among the first rank *jagirdars* of the state along with the Sesodia lineages.<sup>5</sup> Since no Sesodia could marry a Sesodia, the Ranas took their wives either from their noble Rajput subjects belonging to other clans or from the ruling dynasties in other states of Rajputana. Highly personalized ties of kinship, marriage and hereditary service cemented and ritualized the bonds between the ruling dynasty and the dominant aristocracy of the state.<sup>6</sup>

The basis of Sesodia control over the countryside and defence against external attack was a careful disposition of the clans and lineages over the territory of Mewar. The rights of government over the outlying areas of the state, which were exposed to the inroads of tribals and the attacks of enemies, were assigned as *jagirs* to the heads of the lineages. The territory of the crown (*khalsa*) lay in the heart of the country and was consequently well protected. About three-fifths of the state was assigned to *jagirdars* of various ranks; the crown lands, although much smaller in size, were the best and the richest (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

*Distribution of Land Tenures in Mewar, 1941*

	Villages		Population	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Khalsa	1,553	27.5	7,51,753	39.1
Jagir	3,546	63.5	9,83,758	51.1
Muafi (rent-free)	503	9.0	1,87,752	9.8
TOTAL	5,582	100.0	19,23,263	100.0

SOURCE: *Census of Mewar, 1941*, vol. II, pp.582-3.

The *jagirdars* of Mewar were divided into four ranks. Chiefs of the first rank, numbering nineteen, appeared in the court of the Rana only on special invitation, upon festivals and solemn ceremonies. They were hereditary councillors of the crown and in the *darbar* they enjoyed a higher rank than the crown prince. The second-class chiefs, numbering thirty-four, were required to be in attendance on a more regular basis. The *faujdar*s (military commanders on the frontier) and military officers were chiefly selected from this rank. The *gole ki sardar*, or chiefs of the third rank were generally holders of separate villages. They were expected to attend on the person of the Rana and formerly constituted the standing force at his command that could always be relied upon against any combination or opposition of the *sardars* of the higher ranks. In a class by itself stood the great estates of the fourth rank, Banera and Shahpura, whose holders enjoyed the title of Raja and sprang from younger branches of the Rana's own family. These chiefs of the Ranawat lineage held on none of the terms of the other clans, and were too powerful to be convenient as subjects.<sup>7</sup>

TABLE 2

*Jagirs of the First Rank in Mewar, 1901*

	Name	Lineage	Population	Income (Rs)	Royal Tribute (Rs)
1.	Asind	Chundawat Sesodia	12,528	80,000	1,300
2.	Amet	Chundawat Sesodia	8,616	28,000	3,415
3.	Badnor	Mertia Rathor	15,242	70,000	4,084
4.	Bansi	Shaktawat Sesodia	5,736	24,000	202
5.	Bari Sadri	Jhala	10,599	48,000	1,024
6.	Bedla	Chauhan	12,866	64,000	4,100
7.	Begun	Chundawat Sesodia	12,505	48,000	6,532
8.	Bhainsror- garh	Chundawat Sesodia	12,270	80,000	7,502
9.	Bhindar	Shaktawat Sesodia	13,097	48,000	4,002
10.	Bijolia	Paramar	7,673	57,000	2,860
11.	Delwara	Jhala	16,255	72,000	4,900
12.	Deogarh	Chundawat	25,146	1,20,000	7,142

		Sesodia			
13.	Gogunda	Jhala	13,972	24,000	2,552
14.	Kanor	Sarangdevot	11,249	32,000	3,166
		Sesodia			
15.	Kotharia	Chauhan	8,053	32,000	1,502
16.	Kurabar	Chundawat	12,643	40,000	None
		Sesodia			
17.	Meja	Chundawat	3,216	25,000	3,121
		Sesodia			
18.	Parsoli	Chauhan	3,388	20,000	926
19.	Salumbar	Chundawat	31,058	80,000	None
		Sesodia			

SOURCE: Erskine, *Udaipur*, Chapter XXI.

The status of the *jagirdars* must be carefully distinguished from that of the *zamindar*, a tenure that did not exist in Mewar, and which seems to have been a peculiar invention of Muslim rule in India. The *jagirdar* had no prescriptive rights in the soil and he enjoyed merely the state's rights over the territory assigned to him. Colonel Tod, the celebrated annalist of Mewar who concluded the alliance between the Udaipur state and the British, commented that 'the agriculturist is, or was, the proprietor of the soil; the chief, solely of the tax levied thereon'.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the peasant in *jagir* areas paid the land revenue to the *jagirdar* instead of the state, and the *jagirdar* was obliged to pay to the state out of this sum only a small and fixed tribute. Within the limits of his *jagir*, he freely exercised the powers of government. Tod, who observed the conditions prevailing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, mentioned that regarding the administration of justice or the internal economy of the *jagirs*, the Rana's officers seldom interfered.<sup>9</sup> The great chiefs of the first rank were practically independent in their own territories. Their government in the *jagirs* was an exact replica of the Rana's government on a smaller scale. The great chief commanded the services of his own sub-vassals (either kinsmen or Rajputs of other clans), who were assigned grants of land, attended on the chief with quotas of troops, and formed his council in peace and war.

The political system of Mewar, which had withstood Mughal attacks under Akbar and Jahangir, cracked during the disintegration of the Mughal empire, when the country was overrun from without by marauding bands of Marathas and Pathans and was torn from within by the feuds of the Chundawats and the Shaktawats,



who rose frequently in rebellion against the prince. During this time of troubles, the chiefs steadily encroached on the *khalsa*, appropriating royal lands to their *jagirs*; the services of the vassals to their overlord, the Rana, dwindled, so that mercenary bands of Sindhis, who ravaged the country, had to be deployed by the prince for defence, with disastrous consequences to the clan organization on which the state rested. The erosion of the authority of the prince was reflected in the spread of the payment of blackmail (*rakhwali*) by villagers for freedom from molestation. In order to secure protection whole communities of peasants tied themselves through a form of servitude known as *basi* to any warrior able to wield arms in the neighbourhood.<sup>10</sup> In the midst of these tribulations, urban life practically ceased. The entire town of Bhilwara, a flourishing commercial entrepot at one time, was deserted; and the capital, Udaipur, which once boasted 50,000 houses, had now 3,000 occupied, the rest being in ruins. Such were the conditions in which Mewar entered into a treaty of subordinate alliance with the British in 1818.<sup>11</sup>

Colonel Tod, who came to Udaipur in that year to administer the alliance, was captivated by the romantic past of Mewar. He attempted to restore as far as possible the ancient system of the Udaipur state, with necessary adjustments for the new times. In this project he partially succeeded; his task in its entirety was impossible to carry out, as the very treaty of subordinate alliance, which was to be the instrument of restoration, distorted the structure of the state inevitably. His task, as Tod himself defined it, 'was to bring back matters to a correspondence with an era of their history—when the rights of the prince, the vassal and the cultivator were alike well defined—that of Umra Singh'.<sup>12</sup>

The first point to effect, as Tod saw it, was the recognition of the prince's authority by the nobles. Feuds were to be appeased, a difficult and hazardous task, and usurpations to be redeemed. The assiduous Agent to the Governor-General was not, however, to be discouraged by these difficulties. Under Tod's supervision, an agreement between the Rana and his chiefs was ultimately reached through tense negotiations in 1818. The document, which evokes a vivid picture of the times, deserves to be fully quoted:

Sid Sri Maharajadhiraj, Maharana Bhim Singh, to all the nobles, my brothers and kin, Rajas, Patels, Jhalas, Chauhans, Chundawats, Paramars, Sarangdevots, Shaktawats, Rathors, Ranawats etc., etc.

Now since S. 1822 (A.D. 1776), during the reign of Sri Ur Singh-ji, when the troubles commenced, laying ancient usages aside, undue separations of the land have been made: therefore, on this day, Baisakhbadi 14th, S. 1874 (A.D. 1818), the Maharana, assembling all his chiefs, lays down the path of duty in new ordinances.

1. All lands belonging to the crown obtained since the troubles, and all lands seized by one chief from another, shall be restored.

2. All Rakhwali (protection money), bhum (service lands), lagats (cesses), established since the troubles, shall be removed.

3. Dhan, Biswa (transit duties), the right of the crown alone, shall be renounced.

4. No chiefs shall commit thefts or violence within the boundaries of their estates. They shall entertain no thugs, foreign thieves or thieves of the country, as Mogis, Baoris and Thoris; but those who shall adopt peaceful habits may remain; but should they return to their old pursuits, their heads shall instantly be taken off. All property stolen shall be made good by the proprietor of the estate within the limits of which it is plundered.

5. Homes of foreign merchants, traders, kafilas (caravans), banjaris (bullock caravans for grain and salt) who enter the country shall be protected. In no wise shall they be molested or injured and whoever breaks this ordinance, his estate shall be confiscated.

6. According to command, at home or abroad, service must be performed. Four divisions (choukis) shall be formed of the chiefs, and each division shall remain three months in attendance at court, when they shall be dismissed to their estates. Once a year, on the festival of the Dasera, all the chiefs shall assemble with their quotas ten days previous thereto, and twenty days subsequent they shall be dismissed to their estates. On urgent occasions, and whenever their services are required, they shall repair to the Presence.

7. Every Pattawat holding separate Patta from the Presence, shall perform separate service. They shall not unite or serve under the greater Pattawats; and the sub-vassals of all such chiefs shall remain with and serve their immediate Pattawat.

8. The Maharana shall maintain the dignities due to each chief according to the degree.

9. The ryots shall not be oppressed: there shall be no new exactions or arbitrary fines. This is ordained.

10. What has been executed by Thakur Ajit Singh and sanctioned by the Rana, (i.e. the subordinate alliance with the British), to this all shall agree.

11. Whosoever shall depart from the foregoing, the Maharana shall punish. In doing so the fault will not be the Rana's. Whoever fails, on him be the oath (an) of Eklinga and the Maharana.

Signed by the Maharana,  
Colonel Tod and 33 chiefs.

Agreement was thus reached that the traditional authority claimed by the prince, and the privileges and obligations of the

chiefs, were to be restored. But the precise extent of princely authority, and the limits of obligations and privileges, which were not defined in the agreement, remained a perpetual source of tension between the Rana and his principal *sardars*. The Salumbra chief, who was head of the Chundawat lineage, headed a faction of *jagirdars* who consistently opposed the Rana in internal and external matters. In 1855 the Maharana sought to curb the defiance of the Salumbra faction by attaching villages from their respective estates. The Salumbra chief and his allies forcibly drove out the troops and officials sent to effect the orders of the prince. Since the British adopted a stance of neutrality in this matter, the Rana suffered a severe loss of prestige.<sup>13</sup> The Salumbra chief seized the occasion of the uprising of 1857 to press his demands on the Rana, and secretly aided the rebels because the Rana stood loyally by the side of the British.<sup>14</sup> Again in 1861, upon the death of the old Rana, the Salumbra party demanded postponement of the accession of the new Maharana until the head of the Chundawat lineage, from whom the Ranas had traditionally received the mark of coronation, agreed to it. When this demand was not complied with, the Salumbra party absented themselves in a body from the ceremony.<sup>15</sup> The difficulty of the Rana was that he was no longer the supreme authority with regard to the chiefs. The presence of the British as a third party necessarily acted as an element of instability in the relations between the durbar and the *thikanas* (as the *jagirs* were locally known). Gradually, however, the princes asserted their authority over the chiefs in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The stabilization of the relations between the Rana and the *sardars* led in 1878 to a drawing up of the rules of procedure, regarding the extent of the Rana's civil and criminal jurisdiction in the *thikanas*, which had not been defined by the agreement of 1818. A British observer wrote regarding the state of affairs in Mewar: 'The feudal system holds good here as in all Rajputana. Each "Thakoor" is independent and rules his state administering the laws as though he were king'<sup>16</sup> With the progress of reforms in the royal administration, which was being placed on the basis of definite rules and regulations after the Mutiny, it became imperative to bring the procedure in the *jagir* administration into conformity.<sup>17</sup> It was finally agreed that the Maharana should not interfere with the civil and criminal cases of the fourteen first-class

*jagirdars* who entered into the agreement, but it was laid down that he would hear appeals in those cases. It was also provided that cases of murder, dacoity, highway robbery, sati, traffic in children and counterfeiting of coins would have to be reported to the durbar and the proceedings in each case submitted for scrutiny. Rules and regulations framed by the state would apply to the *thikanas* as well as the *khalsa*.<sup>18</sup>

The relations between the prince and the *jagirdars* were thus being more clearly defined in the late nineteenth century. But relations between the *jagirdars* and their peasants remained entirely unregulated, although at the same time the progress of settlement operations in the *khalsa* area placed the relations between the state and the peasants on a defined basis. The main sources of tension within the traditional structure of the Udaipur state, as we have seen, were those inherent in the relations between the prince and his vassals. Relations between the lord and his peasants were much less frequently disturbed. It was only after 1914 that peasant unrest in Mewar came to all-India notice, and replaced the recalcitrance of the chiefs as the main problem confronting the state. However, even in the nineteenth century the peasantry of Mewar were not altogether a passive element in the population.

The independence of the cultivator in these parts was embodied in the ancient adage of Rajasthan recorded by Tod at the beginning of the nineteenth century: '*Bhog ra dhani raj ho, bhum ra dhani ma cho*' (the government is the owner of the revenue, but I am the master of the land). Below the clan organization of the Rajputs, which defined the structure of the Udaipur state, there stood a distinct social organization of the peasants that enabled them, upon occasion, to oppose the durbar or the *thikana*. The great cultivating castes of Mewar possessed an institution, called the *chokhala*, which was absent among the Rajputs. The Rajputs, whose patrilineal clans were exogamous, necessarily maintained a widespread marriage network which extended beyond the state and served to integrate the whole caste on a supra-local basis. Local particularism was much stronger among people of peasant stock, such as Jats, Gujars, Gadris and Dhakars, whose marriage network did not extend far beyond the locality. But this very factor enabled them to put forward, whenever necessary, strong local combinations comprising several villages of the neighbourhood. For each peasant caste in every village was tied to members of the same caste in



neighbouring villages through the *chokhala*, which constituted the marriage circle as well as the unit for enforcement of caste discipline.<sup>19</sup> There was, moreover, a ready mechanism by which the localized resistance of a particular peasant caste could be translated into a generalized form of peasant unrest over large parts of the state. Peasants from all over the state, belonging to different castes, assembled at the great fair which met once a year in May at the sacred bathing pool of Matri Kundiya, in the district of Rashmi at the centre of Mewar. On two occasions, first in 1880 and again in 1921, the fair at Matri Kundiya provided the focal point for organizing peasant resistance involving several castes from all over the central plains of the state.

In the *jagir* areas, where, unlike the *khalsa* lands, there prevailed no general regulations, relations between lord and peasant varied a good deal from *thikana* to *thikana*. At one end of the scale stood the extensive dominions of the nineteen first-class and the thirty-four second-class chiefs and the rajas of the Ranawat lineage; at the other end, the mass of small *jagirs*, consisting of a village or two, of the *goal ki sardar*. In the great *thikanas*, where the chiefs' authority over the sprawling territory was necessarily lax, local power was often enjoyed by subordinates of the lord or by his revenue officials, and the points of tension were many in such a complex hierarchy. The *gole ki sardar*, who normally resided in the village over which he had been granted dominion, was able to exercise a much more effective control of his kinsmen and peasants. In fact the lineage as a whole could maintain a tight hold over the village population in the smaller *jagirs*, on account of the fact that the Rajputs usually constituted a substantial element in the population: the *jagirdar's* numerous kinsmen were part of the body of ryots and held a large portion of the agricultural lands in their own right. By contrast the Rajputs in the greater dominions (with a few exceptions) were very thin on the ground and by no means belonged exclusively to the *jagirdar's* lineage. Many villages contained no Rajputs at all and the majority were dominated by the cultivating castes in practical freedom from local Rajput interference in village affairs.

A recent sociological account of the village of Ranawaton ki Sadri affords a close view of the historical development of lord-peasant relations in a typical smaller *jagir*.<sup>20</sup> In the eighteenth century this was a small forest hamlet of nineteen families which belonged to the big second-class *jagir* of Sanwad, held by a *jagirdar* of the Ranawat

lineage. The village had no Rajputs and belonged to twelve related families of the Dwala clan of the Gadri. Agriculture had not yet developed, and hunting was the main occupation. This was the situation when, around 1811, a younger brother of the *jagirdar* of Sanwad won the favour of his kinsman, the Rana, who conferred on him a *jagir* over the village with the rank of *gole ki sardar*. The village was detached from Sanwad against the protests of the *jagirdar* of Sanwad, and from its previous position as part of a large second-class *jagir*, it was converted into a small *jagir* of the third rank consisting of one hamlet only. So poor and undeveloped were its resources (the total tribute of the village in the first year of the chief's arrival being nine maunds of maize and three maunds of animal fodder) that upon his arrival Thakur Zorawar Singh was greeted by a Bhil woman with the remark, 'You can keep the maize reserved for your respectable guests and eat the animal fodder yourself.' Under the fostering care of Zorawar Singh, who carried out a systematic policy of settling Rajput, Gadri and other families from Sanwad by providing communal facilities, the hamlet grew into an agricultural village between 1811 and 1860. In this initial stage the new colony was populated by artisans, service castes and peasants weaned away from the parent *jagir* of Sanwad. In the next stage, from 1860 to 1910, there were arrivals from different parts of Mewar and even from outside the state, but by that time migration had ceased to be the main source of increase of population. Rajputs, all belonging to the chief's lineage, came to constitute about 20 per cent of the population, and the *jagirdar* and his kinsmen occupied roughly 40 per cent of the agricultural land, mostly leasing it out to share-croppers. In addition the *jagirdar* commanded a near monopoly of credit in the village from the beginning and took great care to keep the *mahajan* away from the village until fairly late in its history. Thus the pattern of settlement was strictly controlled by the *jagirdar*; some castes were given facilities for settling in the village; others were denied entry. His fortress overlooked and dominated the village. In all major crises he provided crucial leadership. In the disastrous famine of 1899 he imported wagonloads of grain, made a remission of all demands for cash payments and provided work by organizing the repair of two tanks and the construction of a new one. In the famine of 1939 again he employed 300 to 400 people for the repair of tanks and the digging of wells as relief work; the total wage bill for this came to Rs 6,000 in cash and 400 maunds of

foodgrain. The *jagirdar* thus actually resided in the village and exercised his authority and powers effectively.

Altogether different in structure was the *jagir* of Bijolia, which was spasmodically convulsed by agrarian disturbances from the late nineteenth century and became the foremost trouble spot in Rajputana after 1914. This was an ancient and sprawling *jagir* of about a hundred square miles, consisting of eighty-three villages, held by a first-class *jagirdar* of the Paramar clan. Of the inhabitants, less than five per cent were Rajputs in the 1890s. The peasants belonged mainly to the Dhakar caste, which held most of the land in the estate.<sup>21</sup> These Dhakars had come from the neighbouring states of Bundi, Kota and Gwalior, which bordered on Bijolia, and they had substantial connections with their brethren and relations across the border. They were thus not entirely dependent on the *jagirdar* and could seek lands with the aid of their relations in neighbouring states. This was an important change from the time of Colonel Tod who found among the inhabitants a large element of serfs, who were tied to the Paramar ruling lineage on a hereditary basis. The Dhakars maintained strong and independent caste institutions, which gave them a social organization stretching far beyond the limits of the *jagir*.<sup>22</sup>

The soil of the *jagir* was not very productive and the tribute taken by the ruling lineage, which varied from a quarter to a half of the produce, was therefore a heavy burden on the peasants, who were compelled to pay in addition a variety of vexatious taxes. In 1897 the peasants, having gathered at the village of Girdharpa on the occasion of a funeral ceremony, took the drastic decision of sending a deputation of two leading Patels to appeal against their *thakur* to the Maharana at Udaipur. The Maharana in response sent an Assistant Revenue Officer to enquire into their grievances and this officer reported unfavourably on the numerous cesses exacted by the *thakur*. The Maharana abolished a few cesses and issued a warning to the *jagirdar*. The Rao of Bijolia retaliated by expelling the two Patels who had gone to Udaipur. Soon afterwards he was able to reassert his authority in the devastating famine of 1899 when he constructed a dam and gave free rations to the distressed, thus undermining peasant unity. However, he overplayed his hand by imposing a new cess, payable on the marriage of every peasant's daughter at the rate of Rs 5. The peasants in protest stopped marrying their daughters, and in 1905 they took two hundred mar-

riageable daughters in a body to the Rao, demanding that their marriage be allowed without payment of a cess. The Rao yielded to their demands as they threatened to leave the *jagir* to cultivate lands in Gwalior, Bundi, and Kota. Next year the Rao died, and his successor immediately imposed a new tax on the peasants in order to pay his succession tax to the Maharana. There was mounting discontent under the new rule, and this culminated in a march of 1,000 peasants to the palace of the *thakur*, who refused to see them. The peasants then decided not to cultivate the lands in Bijolia and to take lands in the *khalsa* area of Mewar as well as in the states of Bundi and Gwalior on lease. The frightened durbar strongly supported the *thikana* against this virtual peasant revolt, the leaders were exiled or jailed, and the movement, for the time being, was crushed.<sup>23</sup>

The *khalsa* area also witnessed peasant disturbances in the late nineteenth century. Here the traditional mode of revenue payment was either a crop division based on a conjectural estimate of the crop on the ground or an actual division of the crop at the time of reaping.<sup>24</sup> The amount of state revenue fluctuated a great deal from year to year and during the reign of Sajjan Singh the advantages of a regular settlement were pressed home on the durbar. However, the matter was not without difficulty. If in the *jagir* areas the state was practically powerless against the resolute resistance of the dominant Rajput lineages to any interference in internal affairs, its control over the *khalsa* area was also weak on account of the entrenched position and vested interests of the non-martial literate castes in the civil and revenue administration.

In 1872-3 an influential official of the state, Mehta Panna Lal, sought to carry out reform of the revenue system by introducing cash rates instead of the old method of division of the crop. But heavy rains destroyed the crop in 1875 and there was a rising against the new reform and a demand for return to crop division. The durbar yielded to the threat of large-scale migration to Malwa, a number of carts having been loaded up and started on the road to give effect to the threat. Few of the magistrates had their heart in the work: 'All alike saw in its achievement the certain loss of much of their influence, and nearly all of their illegitimate profit.' Subordinate officials were still more opposed to the measure.<sup>25</sup> Defeated in its first move, the durbar asked for a British Settlement Officer, 'because the central authority felt itself a prisoner in the meshes of



its own servants, and because it repeatedly failed to extricate itself. It looked to the officer to rid it of the continual boundary feuds with the *jagirdars*, who were habitually encroaching on the *khalsa*, and it also 'hoped he would arm it with weapons which would give it control over Zillah officials it had never enjoyed'.<sup>26</sup> Wingate, the new Settlement Officer, commenced operations for regular measurement in 1880. At the same time the durbar appointed an energetic Forest Officer from the Punjab to prevent use of the waste lands for grazing purposes without payment of a fee. The two measures, simultaneously adopted with little thought of their combined effect on the people, aroused widespread resentment that came to a head at the annual fair of Matri Kundiya in 1880. The large number of Jat peasants who gathered on this occasion swore on 20 June not to cultivate the lands until the measurement and forest projects were abandoned. The magistrates and their subordinates once again instigated the people, since exact measurement would cut down their illegal perquisites. They encouraged the belief of the Jats of central Mewar that the object of these projects was to deprive them of their *Bapota*, which they had cherished for centuries and which, they contended, extended to the waste. The nearby Rajput *jagirdars* of Salumbar and Bhindar, habitual trouble-makers for the durbar, joined this whispering campaign and encouraged the Rajput tenants to join the Jats. Wingate was 'greatly struck with the completeness and obstinacy with which the Jats had carried out their decision not to plough except the fields sown before 20 June; for miles and miles the fields were nothing but grass; one by one, all castes, even the Rajputs, had been drawn into the federation; and unless our mission should prove successful, I foresaw that before long there would be serious distress among the poorer classes.'<sup>27</sup> The situation was saved by Mehta Panna Lal, the recognized head of the *mahajan* class which dominated the district administration. He was sent out from Udaipur by the durbar to pacify the peasants. As soon as he left the capital the magistrates, who had quietly instigated the people against Wingate, went out speedily to their charges, and persuaded all castes to plough, except the Jats. 'The Jat confederacy', reported Wingate, 'had got beyond their control.' Mehta Panna Lal finally brought round the Jats with certain concessions, settlement operations began again, and were completed by 1893. The rates fixed were on the whole lower than those formerly prevailing and were paid without difficulty.<sup>28</sup> But the peculiar relation

between the durbar and the zilla officials was revealed in the failure to punish a single official, though they had notoriously fostered the July uprising of 1880. The *mahajan* class, who were both state officials and the people's bankers, controlled the local administration in the *khalsa* area. If in the past the Rajput lineages in the *jagirs* had proved troublesome, the literate *mahajans* were to prove in the future the source of a new kind of trouble—popular agitation.

As a matter of fact the towns, where the *mahajan* element preponderated, had never been wholly tractable even in the nineteenth century. When town life revived after the treaty with the British, an arena of political life was created over which the durbar never had full control. The commercial town of Bhilwara, which was repopulated under the active patronage and encouragement of Colonel Tod, became the cockpit of raging factions. To revive trade, bankers from outside were given facilities to open branches. Soon there developed a bitter hostility between the foreign and native *mahajans*, the latter demanding a lower rate of tax for themselves. When Colonel Tod managed to pacify the two parties, a new conflict developed between the panchayats of the two sects into which the *mahajan* class of Bhilwara was divided—the Jains and the Vaishnavas.<sup>29</sup> The *mahajans* wielded substantial power through the bodies of *chotias*, or assessors of justice, elected by the citizens, to aid the chief magistrate, an office usually hereditary in the premier *mahajan* family of the city.<sup>30</sup> The availability of power and patronage through these traditional institutions was an efficient cause of uncontrollable urban factions in every town. The largely autonomous political life of the towns was later on to sustain public agitation on populist lines.

Finally the state confronted another problem—the Bhils. Pushed back into the mountains and deprived of the means of livelihood, the tribals readily resorted to depredations that seriously disturbed the conditions of life in the south-west. Among the many Bhil uprisings in the nineteenth century, the most serious was the widespread revolt of 1881. This outbreak was due to several factors: 1) the census operations which aroused suspicion; 2) the monopoly of liquor given to an outsider, thus depriving the Bhils of the privilege of distilling their own liquor; 3) the more vigorous collection of customs duties by the imposition of new customs stations along the border; and 4) the growing interference with the 'right' to levy *balawa*, or blackmail, by making over watch and ward of the roads

to the police. The Bhils, armed only with bows and arrows, bowed before superior forces.<sup>31</sup> An agreement was reached, but it was bound to be unstable on account of the tightening up of administration that was undermining their tribal way of life.

One should not exaggerate the elements of instability in the traditional political system of Mewar. Disturbances, which earn an easy notoriety, tend to obscure the fact that for long periods the country remained quiet after order was restored by Colonel Tod in 1818. All that is intended to be conveyed in the above discussion is that in spite of a high degree of ritualization, the internal relationships within the political structure of the Udaipur state were by no means perfectly adjusted. There were tensions inherent in four important sets of relationships that became relevant to twentieth-century political unrest: 1) the *darbar-thikana* relations; 2) the relations between the peasants and the *khalsa* and *jagir* authorities; 3) the relations between the urban classes and the administration; and 4) the relations between the state and the Bhils.

### *Weakness of the Reforming Impulse*

In the late nineteenth century there was no popular agitation, as in British territory, for reforms in Mewar. Such constitutional and administrative reforms as were carried out during the two decades and a half following the Mutiny were due to the initiative of British officials. Consequently reforms came to be associated with the pro-British party at the *darbar*, headed by the brilliant Mehta Panna Lal. The party at court which was anxious to maintain Mewar's independent identity was opposed to innovations dictated by the British. Until the accession of Maharana Fateh Singh in 1884, Mehta Panna Lal's party was dominant at court and with his aid the British officers carried out the only reforms Mewar was to see until the coming of the Second World War; after Fateh Singh's accession, no reforms were made in the structure of the Udaipur state, which remained in consequence one of the most pristine of the princely states.

Most important among the administrative reforms carried out in the 1860s and 1870s were the regularization of the central government through the constitution of a formal Executive Council and Supreme Court of Appeal, and the reorganization of the district administration on the basis of a topographical survey and division of the *khalsa* area into seven districts. For the *jagir* area an agreement

was reached with the chiefs defining the centre's right of supervision. The *khalsa* area had a regular revenue settlement for the first time. A Public Works Department, set up under an English officer, initiated a few rail, road and irrigation works. The first government school, opened in 1863, began to offer English education in Udaipur from 1865, and two more schools were opened in Bhilwara and Chittor in the 1870s.<sup>32</sup>

The accession of Maharana Fateh Singh brought to an end this era of limited reform. Fateh Singh's policy was to restore the ancient authority of the Ranas, to resist British interference as far as possible and to impose control over the unruly chiefs of the state. He believed in strong personal rule and his reign marked the end of the power of Mehta Panna Lal, who was regarded as an agent of the British. He had little education, having spent his youth in his family village, where he had led the simplest life, devoted largely to sticking pigs and shooting tigers. But he had a profound consciousness of the heroic and glorious past of the Sesodias, and he was determined to restore the dignity of the throne, which his immediate predecessors had lowered by years of subservience to the British. His fixed principle was to govern like his ancestors and to change nothing. He had a shrewd appreciation of the dangers of interference with existing procedures and was in no hurry to make decisions, an attitude which was reflected in his advice to his officers that if only things were left alone, problems would often be settled of their own accord.<sup>33</sup>

One of the first acts of Fateh Singh on coming into power was to stop the project of a railway line conceived during the previous reign. An imperial railway line from Rajputana to Malwa already ran via Chittor through the eastern portion of Mewar and the state authorities proposed to build a connecting line from Udaipur to Chittor. In spite of British objections, Fateh Singh stopped construction on this project on the ground that funds were not available. He also successfully blocked the British demand for supply of imperial troops. Udaipur remained the only important princely state free from the obligation to supply troops to the British. However, the Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana persuaded him to implement the Udaipur-Chittor railway project as the price of British consent to his decision to dismiss Mehta Panna Lal. Upon the dismissal of Mehta Panna Lal, he assumed personal charge of state affairs and in spite of repeated British requests he refused to



appoint another Dewan, since he regarded such an influential officer as a potential ally of the British and an opponent of the authority of the Rana. His officials had no real powers and initiative. Being of a suspicious nature, he played off one official against another, and as a result, the cohesion and efficiency of the central administration was undermined. The highest judicial body in the state practically ceased to function. The State Education Committee, appointed by the previous Maharana, was abolished by Fateh Singh, and control of education was given directly to the durbar. The durbar showed no disposition to spend the accumulating sums allocated to education, the progress of which was halted. Fateh Singh strained his relations with the *jagirdars* by trying to impose control over them, and although he generally triumphed in all direct confrontations with his chiefs, the virtual breakdown of the earlier agreements seriously affected the administrative capacity of the state to cope with the devastating famine of 1899. At the end of the famine, the A.G.G. Rajputana reported that Fateh Singh, being distrustful of his own officials, had concentrated the administration in his own hands and was finding himself overwhelmed with a mass of confusing details. The Agent, however, observed that notwithstanding his refusal to carry out reforms, Fateh Singh's administration did not generally appear to be unpopular.

Apart from the Udaipur-Chittor railway, no major construction work was undertaken by Fateh Singh, and the mileage of metalled roads actually decreased. After the famine of 1899 a British team concluded in a survey report that Mewar had immense possibilities of irrigation and suggested several irrigation projects. To implement these projects the A.G.G. Rajputana requested Fateh Singh to open a separate irrigation department. The Maharana was by no means enthusiastic, but after several delays opened an irrigation department with an English officer in charge. This step led to no concrete result, and none of the three irrigation projects was ever carried out. Impatient with his conduct of administration, the British authorities were further exasperated by his tardy co-operation during the First World War. He blocked proposals for mica mining in the state as part of the war effort, since he wanted a minimum of British control over the mines, and was unaccommodating when the value of the British rupee fell below that of the Udaipur rupee. After the war when peasant disturbances broke out on a large scale, the British seized this as an excuse to force the

independent-minded Maharana to step down in favour of his son. The ostensible reason for this drastic step was his failure to reform the administration, but the real reason was his consistent opposition to British interference in state affairs.<sup>34</sup> Under the next ruler, Bhupal Singh, there were no far-reaching reforms, but his administration was far more amenable to British control during a dangerous phase of peasant unrest and popular agitation.

Under the new administration, the basic structure of the state remained unaltered until 1945. The only immediate reform was in the sphere of municipal self-government. A cautious and limited step in this direction was taken with the establishment of a Municipal Board in Udaipur in 1922. Until then the police had supervised conservancy in the capital. However, all the members of the new municipality were nominated. On similar lines, municipalities were established at Bhilwara in 1938 and at Chittor in 1939. In 1940 the Udaipur municipality was reconstituted with a majority of elected members, but due to representation of special interests power remained with the officials. Then in 1945 a full-fledged corporation with real powers was set up in Udaipur, its president and vice-president being elected by the members. It was the first of its kind in Rajasthan. But it had come too late to save the rule of the dynasty of Bappa Rawal.<sup>35</sup>

Progress in the direction of responsible government was even slower. Not until 1939 was a liberal statesman, T. Vijaya Raghavachariar, appointed as Dewan to introduce administrative reforms. A Central Advisory Board and District Advisory Boards were set up, but having no real powers they failed to arouse enthusiasm. The members were all nominated. In 1941 the Mewar government therefore proposed to erect a legislative assembly with an elected majority on a restricted franchise and with special representation for *jagirdars* and nobles. No action, however, was taken, because soon afterwards the state adopted a repressive policy to crush the Quit India Movement. Not until 1945 was the ban on political activity lifted and constitutional discussions once again initiated. The proceedings of the Central and District Advisory Boards, the only representative bodies functioning during these years, were generally dull and aroused no interest.<sup>36</sup>

In its social and economic conditions also, Udaipur state remained one of the most backward. The construction of the two railway lines, the Rajputana-Malwa line and the Udaipur-Chittor

line, was accompanied by an actual decrease of the mileage of metalled roads, some of which went out of use. While facilitating the processes of famine relief, the development of the railways had an adverse effect on indigenous manufactures. It enabled the British to impose a salt monopoly on Mewar by an agreement with a reluctant durbar, under which the manufacture of salt inside the state was discontinued. No industries were stimulated by the railways. Since there was nothing to invest in, the monied classes took their capital outside the state. Mewar had no major cash crop that could be exported. One cotton press, owned by the state, was the only organized industry in the principal commercial centre, Bhilwara. Lead, zinc and copper mines, once yielding an enormous revenue, had been exhausted by the nineteenth century. But state expenditure was so limited that the government could generally produce a revenue surplus every year. Only a small portion of the income was spent on public works, education, health, etc.<sup>37</sup> Till the resignation of Fateh Singh, there was one institution of higher education in the whole state, the Maharana High School at Udaipur. On his accession Bhupal Singh converted it into an intermediate college in 1923. A Bhupal Noble School was also opened to train the sons of Rajput chiefs. There were only three other centres, Chittor, Bhilwara and Jahajpur, where some English education was imparted.<sup>38</sup> One newspaper, *Navjivan*, was published from Udaipur. Few of the basic factors of modernization, that had so stimulated political change in British India, were present in Udaipur state. But although primitive conditions prevailed inside the state, the outside world was brought closer through post and telegraph and railways. The social and political system of Udaipur became an anachronism in the twentieth century. It could not be insulated indefinitely from the dissolving influences from outside, which could in turn accentuate long-standing tensions in the state's political and social structure.

### *Peasant Satyagraha*

It was a political leader from outside, Vijay Singh Pathik, who transformed the character of agrarian agitation in Mewar. The prehistory of peasant resistance in the domain of Bijolia has been already noted. At that stage it was a purely agrarian resistance for the redress of specific grievances and with no wider and conscious political aims. It was the entry of Pathik on the scene in 1916 that established the growing linkage of this local agrarian action with the

national movement in British India and inspired it with the increasingly conscious political aim of fighting the oppressive features of the existing *thikana* rule over the peasantry. In this modern phase of the agitation, peasant satyagraha was no longer confined to the single *thikana* of Bijolia, but spread over several *jagirs* as well as the *khalsa* lands of Mewar, although Bijolia remained the stronghold of the movement. Among all the princely states of India, it was here in Mewar that the most organized and successful peasant satyagraha was launched, using the same techniques that Gandhi was to apply with signal success in Champaran and Khera a couple of years later. Bijolia in a sense led the rest of India in peaceful, organized peasant satyagraha. One of the leaders of the movement, Haribhau Upadhyay, recalled later with justifiable pride, 'It was the first successful mass satyagraha in the Indian States wherein the peasants displayed considerable heroism, patience and self-suffering.'<sup>39</sup>

The earlier agitation in Bijolia, directed against various cesses over and above the rent, had been led by a sadhu, Sitaram Das, and a *charan* (bard), Fatehkaran. By exiling Fatehkaran, Thakur Prithvi Singh had temporarily checked the agitation, but his death in 1916 altered the situation. His son Kesri Singh was a minor, and the durbar appointed as guardian of the estate an official named Dunga Singh Bhati, who was in favour of redressing the grievances of the peasants. The new guardian encouraged Sadhu Sitaram Das to invite a revolutionary nationalist from U.P., named Vijay Singh Pathik, to the estate. Another official of the *thikana*, Manikya Lal Verma, was also sympathetic towards the peasants and was willing to help Vijay Singh Pathik. The situation was thus ripe for intrigue by the officials of the *jagir* and this was the background which enabled Pathik to come and assume leadership of the peasants of Bijolia. His real name was Bhoop Singh; he was a Gujar from Bulandshahr district in U.P. and had long been associated with revolutionary activities in north India. He had escaped from the British in 1915 and had taken refuge in Mewar under the alias Vijay Singh Pathik.

In the new phase of peasant satyagraha under the leadership of Pathik, two prominent features characterized the movement. In the first place a Panchayat Board was elected in 1916 by about 1,000 assembled peasants, with Sadhu Sitaram Das as its president, which ran a practically parallel government to the *thikana* administration with the aid of volunteers who wore badges of the panchayat.



The panchyat laid down that no peasant would have any dealing with the *thikana* except through the mediation of the panchayat.<sup>40</sup> Haribhau Upadhyay, who came into leadership of the movement at a later stage, justly claimed that the organization of the Bijolia peasants was 'unique'. That organization embraced at least 5,000 peasants who carried on a sustained satyagraha. 'Bijolia', commented Upadhyay in retrospect, 'is the only place in the whole of Rajasthan where Kisan Panchayats on organized lines have been brought into existence.'<sup>41</sup> The existing caste institutions of the Dhakars, who held most of the land in the *jagir* as ryots, made possible this unique peasant organization in Bijolia. The movement was throughout peaceful because tight control was maintained by the leadership, which included besides educated leaders like Vijay Singh Pathik and Manikya Lal Verma, a core of substantial Dhakar yeomen with connections across the border in neighbouring states. These Dhakar yeomen, who enjoyed considerable lands which they cultivated with the aid of village servants and untouchables, were the real controllers of the villages. The second feature which distinguished the movement in Bijolia was the conscious avowal of nationalist aims and the growing rapport with Congress leaders in British territory. Ram Narain Chowdhry, a political leader from Ajmer who came to Bijolia for an on-the-spot enquiry, later recorded in his reminiscences: 'I saw that every man, woman, old and young had adopted "Bande Mataram" in upper Mal (i.e. Bijolia), and were filled with nationalist sentiment.'<sup>42</sup> Pathik and Verma attended the Congress sessions of 1918 and 1921 and established useful contact with the national leaders, especially Tilak, Gandhi and Madan Mohan Malaviya.<sup>43</sup> The peasant satyagraha in Bijolia was prominently mentioned in the nationalist press of British India and a direct and continuous connection with Ajmer, the seat of the A.G.G. Rajputana, was established through the Rajasthan Seva Sangh of Ajmer, which rendered important assistance to local leaders in Bijolia.

The Bijolia satyagraha lasted for about six years, during which the *thikana* administration was virtually paralysed. The British authorities, who became anxious about the situation in Bijolia and its impact on the rest of Rajputana, forced Fateh Singh to resign and arranged an agreement with the Bijolia peasants in 1922, which conceded most of their demands. Most of the cesses and forced labour were abolished, the land revenue of the years during which

the satyagrahis did not cultivate the land was remitted, and concessions were made regarding forests and pasture. A signal success was thus attained by the Bijolia satyagrahis.<sup>44</sup>

Although the British succeeded in pacifying the Bijolia peasants in 1922, agrarian agitation had by then spread over other parts of Mewar, especially in those *jagirs* where minors were in possession. There was serious unrest in the first-class *jagir* of Begun, bordering on Bijolia. Held by a Sesodia Chundawat lineage, this *thikana* was also occupied mainly by peasants of the Dhakar caste. The Dhakars were encouraged by happenings in Bijolia to approach Vijay Singh Pathik for the redress of their grievances and accordingly Ram Narain Chowdhry was sent down on behalf of the Rajasthan Seva Sangh to investigate matters. The *jagirdar*, who in this case was an adult, took violent measures for suppressing the movement, and the British officers who had taken conciliatory measures in Bijolia strongly backed his policy of drowning the movement in violence. When two local Dhakar leaders were killed in a firing ordered by the Revenue Commissioner, Trench, Pathik managed secretly to reach Begun and stayed in the house of a Dhakar. He was soon arrested, produced before a court in Udaipur and jailed in 1924.<sup>45</sup> The movement in Begun was crushed by violence, but the brutalities of the durbar and the *thikana* were widely publicized in British India, and the emotional bond between peasant satyagraha in a distant corner of Mewar and nationalist sentiment and organization in the country as a whole was strengthened.

Some other *jagirs* in Mewar also witnessed incidents of peasant agitation. In the first-class *jagir* of Parsoli, panchayats were organized with the aid of the Rajasthan Seva Sangh for airing the grievances of peasants against illegal cesses, but these panchayats were banned and the movement was suppressed by the *thikana* authorities. The movement was conducted with greater success in the second-class *jagir* of Amargarh, where the panchayats were well organized. The peasant organization of Amargarh received important help from the Rajasthan Seva Sangh workers, with whose assistance an agreement was reached with the *thikana* providing for abolition of twenty-three cesses and settlement and fixation of revenue.<sup>46</sup> In the *khalsa* area also, there was agrarian unrest which affected the whole of the central plains of Mewar. As in 1880, thousands of peasants gathered in 1921 at the fair of Matri Kundiya, demanding the abolition of cesses and forced labour, the revision of

Wingate's outdated settlement of the 1880s and more effective expenditure of the cess collected for education and public health. 'Mewar', reported its Resident, 'is becoming the hot bed of lawlessness.'<sup>47</sup>

The peasant satyagrahas in the settled parts of Mewar were generally non-violent. Any violence that occurred was due to the strong-arm methods followed by local chiefs and their officials, who did not scruple to molest peasant women in the villages. But simultaneously the tribal belt towards the south-west was stirred into a millennial unrest, and here the movement was much more violent in its overtones. Motilal Tejawat, a bania of Udaipur, had acquired influence among the Bhils by selling spices. He had adopted their dress, so that in appearance he was indistinguishable from the Bhils, who looked upon him as a veritable messiah. In January 1922 he headed a rebellion of the Bhils in the princely states of Mewar, Sirohi, Danta, Dungarpur and Idar. This widespread revolt was aimed at equalizing the different revenue rates in different states, so that one uniform tax standard might be adopted for the whole of the Bhil belt in Rajputana and Gujarat. Motilal claimed that Gandhi was his teacher and that the movement was part of the non-cooperation movement. Gandhi denied all connection with this violent tribal outbreak. Between May and October 1922 political officers had succeeded in pacifying the Bhils by trying to meet as many of their grievances as possible. Motilal Tejawat was subsequently arrested and jailed for several years by the Mewar durbar.

1922 was thus the climax of unrest in different parts of Mewar. Sporadic peasant unrest continued in some *jagirs* after this, but died down by 1924. From 1922 to 1927 Bijolia remained fairly quiet. But in the latter year satyagraha was resumed in Bijolia and for many years the new administration of Bhupal Singh in Mewar got no breathing space. By the early 1930s the unceasing Bijolia satyagraha had merged with the all-India civil disobedience movement.<sup>48</sup>

Under the agreement of 1922 between the Bijolia chief and his peasants, a new settlement was to replace the old method of payment of rents in kind. Trench, the Revenue Commissioner of Mewar, completed the settlement operations in 1927. Under the new settlement, rents were enhanced by 25 per cent. At the same time the amount of tribute paid to the durbar was raised roughly by one anna in the rupee. Peasants refused to pay at the enhanced rates, demanded remission for several crops ruined by excessive

rains after 1922, and pressed for payment of the educational grant of Rs 30 per month to the panchayat as provided for in the agreement of 1922. Following the advice of Pathik they refused to take new leases for some lands unless rents were lowered according to the prevailing rates in neighbouring Kota. The lands so relinquished were non-irrigated lands, measuring 6,000 bighas out of a total non-irrigated area of 8,000 bighas. The satyagrahis who thus quit-  
ted their lands numbered 3,895, out of whom 3,840 were Dhakars. The *thikana* was thus virtually faced with the prospect of the whole of the non-irrigated area going out of cultivation. The authorities struck back. The aid of landless untouchable groups and village servants of the Balai caste over whom the Dhakars had long exercised control was called un by the *thikana*. The *thikana* accepted the resignations of the satyagrahis and sought to get the deserted lands cultivated by new tenants who fell into three categories: *thikana* officials, local money lenders and traders, and the Balais, Bolas and other pressed communities.<sup>49</sup> They were given new hereditary leases. Thus foiled, the kisans sought fresh remedy by suspension of rent payments from other areas. Their panchayat appointed Haribhau Upadhyay as their representative in negotiations with the authorities. In June 1929 negotiations between Upadhyay and Trench produced an agreement under which the *thikana* was to atone for all violations of the agreement of 1922, the tribute to the durbar was to be embodied in the rent, the rent was to be reduced by one anna in the rupee, the arrears were to be remitted by half and all lands were to be returned to the original possessors.

This impressive victory for the Dhakars proved in the event to be only partial, for the *thikana* was unwilling to remove the new occupants who had stood loyally by the authorities. Upadhyay was put in jail in connection with the civil disobedience movement in Ajmer, and the *thikana* proved unwilling to honour the agreement. It was found impracticable to take back the lands from the new squatters, who refused to budge. After his release Upadhyay sought to contact the authorities, but they refused to give him a hearing, the Maharana being incensed by criticism in the *Tyagbhoomi* for which Upadhyay was held responsible. The Dhakars had now two alternative modes of satyagraha to fall back upon: a) they could hold up payment of rents or b) they could take possession of the land after serving due notice upon the occupants and the authorities. The latter was the course decided upon. The Dhakars served notice of



occupation by 21 April 1931 if no agreement was reached by then. Four hundred dispossessed kisans put the plough to the lands in dispute on the announced day. The new occupants assaulted them, including their prominent leaders, in the presence of the police. Although the kisans remained non-violent, the local leader of the kisans and fifty other satyagrahis were arrested by the police. The military were posted in all areas and trans-border traffic came under strict control, cutting off the Dhakars from aid from the neighbouring states. At Gandhi's advice, satyagraha was suspended in order to arrive at a peaceful understanding, and Jamnalal Bajaj, on behalf of Gandhi, met the Maharana and received the assurance of gradual restoration of lands to the dispossessed peasants. In practice, however, the assurance could not be carried out. The untouchables were unwilling to relinquish the lands, and the other squatters were afraid of the wrath of the authorities if they gave up their newly acquired farms. Satyagraha had in the meanwhile ceased.<sup>50</sup> The Dhakars failed to secure their lands in the non-irrigated areas, although in other respects the demands of the peasants were met.

Peasant unrest had brought about a significant change in the balance of political forces in Udaipur. In the earlier half of the reign of Fateh Singh, the main source of tension within the state was the conflict between the durbar and the *thikanas*. In the latter half of his region, and alliance was formed—largely unconsciously—between the durbar and the *thikanas* against the rising peasant unrest which equally threatened the two contending elements of established authority.

### *Urban Nationalism*

The sustained peasant satyagraha in Bijolia and elsewhere over several years against forced labour and illegal cesses compelled the authorities to redress some local agrarian grievances, but it did not bring about any change in the nature of the state administration.<sup>51</sup> No constitutional sphere for modern political activity was created, and while there was serious rural unrest in the *thikanas*, the towns in Mewar remained by and large quiet during the 1920s. A new political leadership in Udaipur state, headed by Manikya Lal Verma, was being thrown up by agrarian agitation, but until 1938 that leadership, country-based in the first place, was largely absorbed in the task of directing and controlling the *thikana* peasants.

This did not mean that the towns had no political impulse of their

own. Until 1938 that impulse was largely hidden from the public view. But the large capital town of Udaipur had developed an independent civic life in the nineteenth century that could in time produce a centre of opposition to the traditional rule of the Sesodia clan. As in the case of Bijolia, there was in Udaipur a history of discontent, which flowed from the local grievances of the *mahajan* class and other urbanized literate castes, such as the Brahmins and the Kayasthas, who controlled both the systems of finance and credit and the subordinate civil administration in the *khalsa* and the large *jagirs*. At least on two occasions in the nineteenth century the citizens of Udaipur demonstrated their independence by agitating against specific grievances. In 1864, following upon the assumption of control of the administration by the Resident, there was a hartal in Udaipur against the new regulations promulgated by the British. By a notification the *an*—an informal injunction invoked in the name of the Maharana by any private party against another, enjoining the latter to desist from taking any further action in a disputed matter—was abolished on the ground that the Maharana's name was being unjustly invoked by the traders and other wealthy classes to prevent the poor from seeking redress. The mercantile community was stirred into action by this threat, and they obtained the ready support of the chiefs and the young Maharana who were discontented with the Resident's direct rule. On 30 March 1864 a complete hartal was enforced in the town, and 3,000 people marched to the Residency under the leadership of Seth Champalal, the Nagar Seth, demanding restoration of the *an*, stoppage of harassment of the traders by policemen, abolition of compulsory registration of mortgages in the police magistrate's office, settlement of caste and mercantile disputes in accordance with old custom, hearing of complaints in the 'Sethaji's shop' in accordance with panchayat procedure and appointment of native inhabitants of status to preside over the higher courts. The hartal continued for a week, until the Resident succeeded in pacifying the leaders by promising to attend to their grievances.<sup>52</sup> Again in 1978, a hartal was observed by the merchant community of Udaipur against several measures of reform introduced by Maharana Sajjan Singh. Seth Champalal and four other traders were arrested and firm action by the Maharana led to the calling off of the strike.<sup>53</sup>

In these nineteenth-century confrontations the state was the agent of reform, and the mercantile and administrative classes were

its opponents. During the long reign of Fateh Singh, when there was a great swing back towards conservatism, there was still no demand for constitutional advance or administrative reform by the urban classes. The wave of rural unrest after the First World War set off no ripple in the towns of Mewar.

There was no central nationalist organization in Mewar yet, and no machinery of popular agitation in the towns. The peasant movements in the *thikanas* looked for intelligent direction and skilled mediators to Ajmer, where the Rajasthan Seva Sangh was established in 1920 to voice popular demands.<sup>54</sup> This organization had no branch in Mewar (branches were established in Bundi, Kota, Jaipur and Jodhpur), but it sent representatives to the *thikanas* in Mewar to assist the peasant satyagrahis. From 1920 to 1924 the agrarian movements in Bijolia, Begun, Parsoli, Amargarh and Mandesra were directed by local as well as Ajmer members of the Rajasthan Seva Sangh, among whom the most important were Vijay Singh Pathik, Manikya Lal Verma and Ram Narain Chowdhry.<sup>55</sup> By 1928, due to factional squabbles, the Rajasthan Seva Sangh had dissolved, and Pathik had resigned from leadership of the kisan movement due to differences with Manikya Lal Verma. In the absence of any formal nationalist organization, the India-wide civil disobedience movement, which made a fairly strong impression on Ajmer, was a tame affair in Udaipur. In 1932, fifty persons were injured during a police operation to disperse a crowd that had gathered to make a representation to the Maharana for the abolition of some unpopular taxes and the dismissal of corrupt officials. Within a week the minor disturbances in the capital came to an end when the Maharana promised to investigate the complaints.<sup>56</sup>

The above incident, though small, revealed an emerging connection between happenings in British territory and the political situation in the state of Udaipur. The urban classes in Mewar were at length being stirred to action by example, and the Congress ministries formed in the British provinces in 1937 galvanized the citizens of Udaipur into organizing the first political association in the state, the Mewar Praja Mandal, which was founded in 1938 with Manikya Lal Verma as its leader. The new town-based nationalist organization drew heavily upon the political leadership that had been thrown up by the Bijolia satyagraha, and upon the connections that had been forged with national leaders during the agrarian agitation.

This time it was the citizen body which pressed for reform against

a state that was reluctant to introduce any change. This reversal of roles was consistent with the long-term objectives of the urban trading and service families which had always dominated the civil administration of the state. In the nineteenth century they had sought to protect their position within the existing framework of administration by opposing reform and centralization. Now that the state had become staunchly conservative, they wanted to change the whole framework in order to improve their position in the hierarchy of power. The example of political agitation in British territory powerfully suggested new tactics for the pursuit of old goals. The new political leadership thrown up by the Bijolia satyagraha, which had so far merely sought to redress peasant grievances without resorting to a generalized campaign against the entire system of clan domination, at length stated that the Praja Mandal aimed at abolishing the present reactionary administration, which was dominated by feudal elements. There was little expenditure on the welfare of the people. In the municipalities of Mewar, there was no popular representation. There were no rights, no individual liberty.<sup>57</sup> To end this situation, some influential Mewaris met at Udaipur and on 24 April 1938 founded the Mewar Rajya Praja Mandal, a body whose aim was to obtain responsible government by peaceful and legitimate means. Within a week it had secured 1,000 members.<sup>58</sup>

To achieve its aims the Praja Mandal threatened satyagraha, and in response, the state took repressive measures, banning the association and ordering Manikya Lal Verma to leave Mewar. On 4 October 1938 satyagraha began in the towns. There was an unexpected response which alarmed the authorities.<sup>59</sup> The movement was strongest in the town of Nathdwara, where a three-day hartal followed a police lathi charge on a meeting largely attended by Brahmin women. In Bhilwara also there was a lathi charge in which three hundred were injured.

The monthly report on the progress of the satyagraha movement by Manikya Lal Verma mentions a large number of local leaders and political sufferers in different parts of the state. From these names it is clear that the crowd and the leadership in this civil disobedience movement were drawn almost entirely from the trading and service classes of the towns, especially *mahajans*, *bohras* and Brahmins. A few Dhakars, Gujars and Jats figured among the prominent persons of the movement, but it remained basically an urban movement, directed by professional men, service families,



priestly elements and merchants and traders of various descriptions.<sup>60</sup>

At the advice of Mahatma Gandhi civil disobedience was called off in Mewar on 3 March 1939, and to carry out constitutional reforms the Maharana appointed the well-known politician, T. Vijaya Raghavachariar, as Dewan. In 1941 the ban on the Praja Mandal was lifted, and a draft legislature act was circulated for public discussion. The Praja Mandal criticized it for not offering full responsible government and offered suggestions regarding constitutional reforms.<sup>61</sup> But the outbreak of the Quit India Movement in 1942, which made considerable impact on Mewar, led to the breaking off of constitutional discussions and the reimposition of the ban on the Praja Mandal, which demanded severance of relations with British India. The movement spread to many towns and villages of Mewar. Five hundred persons, including seven women, were arrested, and the movement continued till 1944.<sup>62</sup>

In 1945 the ban on the Praja Mandal was finally lifted. In that year the municipal elections to the newly constituted corporation of Udaipur took place. The Praja Mandal, which contested the elections, won twenty-three seats out of a total of thirty-four and convincingly demonstrated its hold on the capital.<sup>63</sup> The Mandal proposed the abolition of the *jagirdari* regime. The Rajput dominant lineages, galvanized into modern political activity by this demand, formed the Kshatriya Sabha and raised the cry of Hinduism in danger. In February 1947, forced by the pressure of events outside, the Maharana announced the decision to appoint a committee to examine the constitutional problem in the state. But by then the initiative had already passed out of his hands and nothing could save the most ancient surviving supremacy in India.

### *Conclusion*

In British India there were many years of patient development of modern forms of urban political activity before movements of nationalism spread from the towns to the countryside. In Mewar there was practically no prior history of nationalism of this type, although the existing structure of rule was by no means immune from internal tensions. The stages of political development were reversed in this backward princely state. Peasant unrest appeared first in a remote *thikana* in a corner of the state, and it was many years afterwards that the leadership thrown up by that peas-

ant satyagraha managed to create a town-based state-wide political organization, the Mewar Rajya Praja Mandal. By contrast, the Congress was already an organization of more than thirty years' standing before peasant satyagraha was organized in British territory. These differences in political development obviously sprang from the restrictive nature of political life in Mewar.

A challenge to the existing order had developed by the time of the First World War, and this challenge developed from maladjustments inherent in the political relationships of the traditional order of things. No new social forces were required within the state for this challenge to develop; none in fact were present. However, once manifested, such movements could strengthen themselves by linking with groups in British territory and capitalizing on the inflow of nationalist ideas. The peasant unrest that broke out had specific local economic grievances to feed upon, but nevertheless the satyagraha of peasants was inspired also by a spirit of nationalism that affected the most backward part of a backward state. Bijolia was a poor area with no modern facilities; the nearest railway station was fifty-five miles away.<sup>64</sup> Yet it was here that the peasants succeeded in organizing the most effective panchayat, which offered the most sustained resistance to the authorities in an ideologically conscious non-violent manner. They made use of existing institutions, the strong marriage and kinship networks of the Dhakars across the borders of the *thikana*. On the basis of these traditional linkages, the panchayat of upper Mal was organized in the 1920s. The urban nationalist organization of the Praja Mandal in the 1930s drew heavily upon this prior agrarian organization for political leadership. But in this later phase of the movement, too, there was no intrusion of new social forces on the scene. The urban classes that participated in the Praja Mandal agitation were the old trading and service elements of the state, which had long played an important role in the state as subordinate elements under the dominant Rajput lineages. The Congress which took power in Rajasthan after 1947 was dominated initially by this urban leadership, and the abolition of *jagirdari* by the new Congress raj was the final act in the displacement of the Rajput lineages from their feudal positions of power.

## NOTES

1. See especially John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal, *Locality, Province and Nation*, Cambridge, 1973.
2. For the traditional history of Mewar, see James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (originally published in 1829); G.H. Ojha, *Rajputane ka Itihas*, Ajmer, 1927; and K.D. Erskine, *Rajputana Gazetteers*, vol. II-A, *Udaipur State*, Ajmer, 1908.
3. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, All India States Peoples Conference Papers, 103/1945-48 [henceforth AISPC].
4. Erskine, *Udaipur*, pp. 36-7.
5. Ibid.
6. For an insight into how these ties were ritualized over centuries, read Tod's 'Annals of Mewar' as well as the personal narrative of his travels, in Tod, *Annals*.
7. Tod, *Annals*, 'Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan'.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. For a description of this time of troubles see Tod, *Annals*.
11. Ibid., 'Annals of Mewar'.
12. Ibid.
13. D.L. Paliwal, *Mewar and the British 1857-1921 A.D.*, Jaipur, 1971, p. 22.
14. Ibid., Chapter 2.
15. Ibid., pp. 61-2.
16. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 167.
17. Ibid., p.167; Erskine, *Udaipur*, p.66.
18. Ibid.
19. For a description of the role of the *chokhala*, see Brij Raj Chauhan, *A Rajasthan Village*, New Delhi, 1967.
20. Ibid.
21. Erskine, *Udaipur*, pp. 99-100.
22. Ram Pande, *Agrarian Movement in Rajasthan*, Delhi, 1974, p.22.
23. Ibid., pp. 23-4.
24. Erskine, *Udaipur*, pp. 72-3.
25. Foreign Department, Political Branch, 1881, Revenue A, Nos. 5-10.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Erskine, *Udaipur*, p. 73.
29. Tod, *Annals*, 'Annals of Mewar'.
30. Ibid., 'Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan'.
31. Foreign Political (A), 1881, Nos. 25-39, pp. 137-79.
32. For details of reforms, see Erskine, *Udaipur*.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
34. The above account of Fateh Singh's administration is based on Paliwal, *Mewar and the British*.
35. R.S. Darda, *From Feudalism to Democracy, A Study in the Growth of Representative Institutions in Rajasthan 1908-1948*, New Delhi, 1971, pp. 218-19.

36. Ibid., pp. 78–84.
37. See Erskine, *Udaipur*, for economic details.
38. Ojha, *Itihas*, p. 320.
39. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Haribhau Upadhyay Papers, File 2, (Bijolia Satyagraha Papers). This file contains a typewritten English historical summary of the Bijolia satyagraha, signed by Upadhyay, 5 June 1931, along with other letters, press cuttings and statements. Unless otherwise mentioned, reference to this file means the historical summary signed by Upadhyay.
40. K.S. Saxena, *The Political Movements and Awakening in Rajasthan (1857–1947)*, New Delhi, 1971.
41. Upadhyay Papers, File 2.
42. Quoted by Saxena, *Political Movements*, p. 153.
43. Ram Pande, *Agrarian Movement*, p. 28.
44. Saxena, *Political Movements*, pp. 153–5.
45. Ibid., pp. 155–7.
46. Ram Pande, *Agrarian Movement*, pp. 37–9.
47. Paliwal, *Mewar and the British*, pp. 253–5.
48. Upadhyay Papers, File 2, is the source for the following account.
49. Upadhyay to Bhaiji, 10 July 1931, *ibid.*
50. Press statement by Upadhyay, 7 October 1937, in *Hindustan Times*, *ibid.*
51. File 143 (Mewar Praja Mandal Papers 1938–47), *ibid.* See entry in the file entitled '*Mewar ka satyagraha sangram*', by Manikya Lal Verma.
52. Paliwal, *Mewar and the British*, pp. 80–3.
53. Saxena, *Political Movements*, p. 39.
54. This body was actually founded in 1919 at Wardha and was removed next year to Ajmer.
55. Ram Pande, *Agrarian Movement*, Chapters I and II.
56. Saxena, *Political Movements*, pp. 215–16.
57. Upadhyay Papers, File 143, '*Mewar ka satyagraha sangram*'.
58. Ibid.
59. English hand-written statement, unsigned (6 pages), in File 143, *ibid.*
60. '*Mewar satyagraha ki pragati, October mas ka vivaran*', by Manikya Lal Verma, in File 143, *ibid.*
61. AISPC Papers, 103/1945–48.
62. Darda, *Feudalism to Democracy*, pp. 17–18; Saxena, *Political Movements*, pp. 239–40.
63. AISPC Papers, 103/1945–48.
64. Upadhyay Papers, File 2.



## 7

# RAJKOT

## Indian Nationalism in the Princely Context: the Rajkot Satyagraha of 1938–9

JOHN R. WOOD

A turning point in the history of the western India princely states, the Rajkot satyagraha of 1938–9 was also an event of sub-continental significance.<sup>1</sup> Although not the first satyagraha in princely India, it represented the first major attempt to secure constitutional change in a princely state through mass civil disobedience. Rajkot was also the first serious test of the Indian National Congress' ability to carry the fight against the British into princely India, and, as well, of princely India's readiness to take part in the all-India struggle. It was a test of the support to be given by the paramount power to the princes and of the durability of the latter against the nationalists. It was a test of the methods of Mahatma Gandhi in a yet untried political environment. What is most curious and needing to be explained, however, is the overriding fact that for the nationalists, the Rajkot satyagraha was, by Gandhi's own admission, a test that *failed*.

To explain the failure calls for an examination not only of Gandhi's misadventure in the Kathiawari principality where his father had been a Diwan (chief minister), but also of political structure and change in Rajkot and the Western India States Agency during the 1920s and 1930s. Rajkot—today a part of Rajkot district in the

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state of Gujarat—provides a useful microcosm in which to examine the nature of princely rule in much of western India and the way in which it responded to the first thrusts towards representative government. The satyagraha must be viewed, however, in the context of the Indian nationalist movement as a whole and the changing political and constitutional relationship between British and princely India. It is argued here that the nationalist movement in princely India exhibited characteristics which distinguished it from the parent movement in British India and that these characteristics derived from the peculiar historical and political legacies of the princely regimes themselves.

*Rajkot in Kathiawar: The Best and Worst of Princely Rule*

State annals have it that the house of Rajkot in Kathiawar was founded by Jam Vibhoji (c.1585–1635), a *abhayat* (younger kinsman of the ruling prince) of the Nawanagar branch of the Jadeja Rajput  $\text{c}^{\text{1}}\text{r}^{\text{2}}$ .<sup>2</sup> Rajkot was smaller than other Jadeja states like Kutch, Nawanagar, or Gondal, but some<sup>1</sup> ow survived both Mughal overlordship and Maratha depredations until the arrival of the British in Kathiawar in 1806.<sup>3</sup> Prior to that date, amidst the general decline of Maratha power in Gujarat, the Kathiawar peninsula had been a turbulent, lawless region. The *mulkgiri* (revenue collecting) armies of the lieutenants of the Gaikwad of Baroda annually set off a chain reaction in Kathiawar of larger rajas preying on *thakurs* (chieftains) and landholders, always inflicting heavy destruction on crops and livestock.<sup>4</sup> In December 1803, Colonel Alexander Walker, the British Resident at Baroda, began receiving petitions from lesser *thakurs* for British intervention on their behalf. Walker's settlement, which was concluded in 1806 with 153 princes and chieftains of the peninsula, including Rajkot's, traded British protection and legitimisation for a *fa'el zamin* or security-bond 'providing for the general peace of the country' and the fixing of a perpetual tribute to be brought annually to Baroda.<sup>5</sup>

The subsequent 'reduction' of Kathiawar—wherein the British suppressed both piracy on the seacoast and the large-scale dacoity of the Vagher, Kathi, and Miana tribes inland—took thirteen years. Perhaps no other part of India was so fragmented by so many political jurisdictions. Rulership in Kathiawar was divided among one Muslim dynasty, the Babis of Junagadh, four major Rajput clans—the Jadejas ruling in Nawanagar, Gondal, Dhrol, Rajkot,

and Morvi, the Jhalas in Dhrangadhra, Limbdi and Wankaner, the Gohils in Bhavnagar and Palitana, and the Jethwas in Porbandar—and a large assortment of other Muslim and Kathi chieftains, many controlling only a handful of villages. Over a third of the land in Kathiawar was not owned or leased directly by the states, but by intermediaries known as *girasdars* or *barkhalidars*. Eventually, as a result of the Rajput practice of bestowing revenue rights on *bhayats*, and the absence of primogeniture among the Kathis, Kathiawar came to support over 50,000 of these intermediaries.<sup>6</sup> In 1863, sweeping reforms were undertaken by a British agent, Major R.H. Keatinge, to systematize jurisdictions and rank the major states according to gun salutes. Ultimately, the Western India States Agency included 17 salute states, 18 non-salute states and 190 minor states and estates—all in an area smaller than Portugal.<sup>7</sup>

In 1820, the British had chosen Rajkot city, mainly because of its centrality in the peninsula, as their agency headquarters for the Kathiawar states. In 1863, the agency acquired from the Rajkot Thakore 385 acres on which to build a civil station and a military cantonment.<sup>8</sup> The civil station area, into which one could walk directly from the princely part of Rajkot city, gradually developed as an island of cosmopolitan British Indian culture in princely Kathiawar. Graced by the British residency, many fine guest houses of the princes and bungalows of the British Political Agents, and Rajkumar College, a public school on the model of an Oxford college built exclusively for princes' sons, the civil station soon gave Rajkot an importance out of all proportion to its size and rank among the princely states of Kathiawar.

Rajkot, like its neighbours, was a limited autocracy: its prince's powers were limited by the dictates of the Political Department, acting through the local British Resident. In practice, however, barring extraordinary mismanagement resulting in civil agitation or state bankruptcy—and, as the Rajkot case suggests, not always even then—Kathiawar princes were allowed a great deal of personal leeway. Salute states like Rajkot retained unlimited civil jurisdiction and, with some exceptions, full criminal jurisdiction over their subjects.

Apart from *de jure* capabilities, however, what might be called 'the princely political idiom' heavily influenced the nature of government in states like Rajkot. Personalism and paternalism were

important elements of the idiom, and rulership carried a strong religious overtone. The prince was expected to govern as the father of his people, acting in their best interest, curbing their wrongdoing and rewarding their virtue. To carry the analogy further, politics in the Kathiawar states were like politics within a family. Because the small élite lived in close proximity to one another, and because the success of 'family' enterprises depended on co-operation and interdependence, consensus and accommodation in decision-making were much sought-after goals. The contrast with nearby British Gujarat, where the development of local government and competitive interest groups was producing a spoils system of reward allocation, is unmistakable.

The well-known institution of the princely *darbar*, summoned during annual festive occasions, was itself a dramatic manifestation of consensual, paternalistic politics.<sup>9</sup> The very seating arrangements reflected and promoted a sense of deference; the aura of *darshan* (awe felt in the presence of someone highly esteemed) inhibited discussion or embarrassing questions. To use modern terminology in an anachronistic yet useful way, a *darbar* was an assemblage of the élite representatives of all the main interest groups in the princely state. For, in addition to the prince, his *Diwan*, and the heads of various departments, the *darbar* brought together the nobles of the ruling clan and the leaders of the local *mahajan* (mercantile association) and other caste groups. Attendance was based primarily on ascription. although, as in the Rajkot case, the *darbars* of some states were later transformed into embryonic legislative chambers with elected members. The key feature was the semblance of consensus achieved through vicarious participation in the making of political decisions.

This is not to suggest that all of the Kathiawar princes were benign. Many ruled with scant regard for individual rights and most allowed no popular participation in government.<sup>10</sup> Nor was conflict always avoided in princely state politics. Where disagreement was unavoidable, a characteristic form of dissent representation was used by each major social group. Brahmins could resort to fasting, Rajputs to outlawry and dacoity, and Vaniyas and Jains to the *hartal* or *bandh* (shop closure or work stoppage). Individual complainants could gain attention by sitting *dharna*.<sup>11</sup> And all of the subjects of the ruler had collective recourse to the most insulting expression of dissent: the *hijrat*, or mass emigration away from the ruler's ter-



ritories. But it would appear that these displays of conflict, most of them non-violent, were notable mainly in their infrequency. In princely politics, open confrontation was avoided wherever possible. Instead, intrigue and quiet manoeuvre served as conflict substitutes. To the outsider, particularly the outsider from British India, princely state politics in Kathiawar appeared to be 'soft', secretive, deceitful, corrupt. To the insider, they were gentle, discreet, gracious, noble, and—nobody else's business.

Low levels of social mobilization both resulted from and fostered the conservatism of the Kathiawar princely élite. The percentage of literates in the Western India States was 9.86 in 1921.<sup>12</sup> Not a single newspaper was published locally. Thus, when pressure for reform ultimately came to the princely states, it was almost by necessity dependent on external stimuli. It was not surprising that the princes were inclined to view the 'outside agitators' as spoilers of their familial consensus.

Namdar Khudavind Thakore Saheb Sir Lakhajiraj Bahadur, K.C.I.E. was a good advertisement for progressive autocracy, and as such, an exception among the general run of Rajput rulers in Kathiawar during his time.<sup>13</sup> Having succeeded to the Rajkot gaddi in 1890 as a minor, Lakhajiraj underwent the standard British tutelage for Indian rulers. Packed off as a boy to Rajkumar College to become a gentleman and sportsman, he moved on at twenty to the Imperial Cadet Corps to train as a soldier, thence to Europe at twenty-three to imbibe the style and values of the West, and finally made his all-India debut at the Delhi Coronation durbar at twenty-six in 1911.<sup>14</sup> Lakhajiraj was knighted in 1918, having contributed horses, a motor ambulance and Rs 2,000 to the Lady Hardinge War Hospital in earnest of his 'steadfast loyalty and devotion to His Imperial Majesty The King and the British Empire' during World War I.<sup>15</sup>

At the outset of his rule, Lakhajiraj's subjects, scattered over 282 square miles in 60 villages and one town, Rajkot city, numbered 50,638. Over the course of the next two decades, the state's population rose by 49% to 75,540, registering the highest rate of population growth of any state in Kathiawar.<sup>16</sup> Much of the increase resulted from the phenomenal growth of Rajkot city, whose population rose by 69% between 1911 and 1931.<sup>17</sup> The city's growth was partly due to the importance of the Rajkot civil station and partly to Rajkot's position as a rail centre for lines linking all the major cities

of the peninsula. As much as these factors, however, it was the enlightened policies of Lakhajiraj which explained the rapid growth. Personally overseeing the socio-economic development of the state, he took much interest in promoting education, welfare, and youth activities. As a result, literacy in Rajkot state climbed during his reign to 26.7%, the highest for any state in Kathiawar.<sup>18</sup> On the economic side, Lakhajiraj founded the Rajkot State Bank in 1914 in order to assist traders and industrialists. During 1914-16, he set up the Rajkot Cotton and Spinning Mills under state ownership, and to empower the looms, developed the Rajkot Power House. The mills grew to employ nearly 800 workers. Eventually, despite its small size, Rajkot ranked among the top five states in Kathiawar in commercial and industrial development.<sup>19</sup>

Lakhajiraj's encouragement of development and entrepreneurship was indirectly reflected in the social composition of Rajkot state. Table I:1 compares the distribution of castes and communities in the state and the civil station with that of the Western India States Agency. It can immediately be seen that Rajkot state contained nearly double the percentage of 'advanced' Hindu caste members found in the Agency as a whole, and that the Rajkot civil station contained an even greater percentage of them than did Rajkot state. The proportion of Brahmins, traditionally the most educated jati, was appreciably higher in both the state and the civil station owing to the concentration of governmental, legal, and educational institutions in Rajkot city. The proportion of merchant jatis, including Vantias, Lohanas, Sonis and, as well, the Jain community, was nearly double in Rajkot state (a combined 18.21% of the total population) what it was in the Agency (9.99%). The disproportionately large presence of these jatis is symptomatic of the congenial economic climate fostered by Lakhajiraj's rulership, and also helps explain his success in promoting commerce and industry.

The Thakore Saheb ordinarily entrusted the government of Rajkot to his Diwan.<sup>20</sup> The latter, aided by a revenue *karbhari* (agent) and a general *karbhari*, oversaw the work of the revenue officer, the chief medical officer, the education inspector, the agricultural officer, and the commissioner of police in their respective departments. The Diwan also superintended the work of the state cotton mill and the state bank. In addition, he sat daily in the *Hazur* (High) Court, as the chief judicial officer of the state,

TABLE I:1

*The Distribution of Caste and Community in Rajkot State, Rajkot Civil Station, and the Western India States Agency, 1931*

Caste/ Community	Rajkot State		Civil Station		W.I.S.A.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Hindu</i>	62,495	82.73	7,836	67.39	3,246,768	81.18
Brahmins	5,626	7.45	1,805	15.52	214,184	5.36
Merchants (Vantias, Lohanas, Sonis)	8,864	11.73	884	7.60	196,026	4.90
Other Advanced Hindus	nil	0.00	29	0.25	5,449	0.14
(Advanced Hindu Subtotal)	(14,490)	(19.18)	(2,718)	(23.38)	(415,659)	(10.39)
Rajput	2,969	3.93	888	7.64	227,137	5.68
Kanbi	13,179	17.45	257	2.21	631,081	15.78
Koli	6,715	8.89	540	4.64	481,285	12.03
Artisans (Sutar, Lohar, Kumbhar, Darji)	6,299	8.34	588	5.06	270,764	6.77
Other Intermedi- ate Hindus	10,409	13.78	790	6.79	714,018	17.85
(Intermedi- ate Hindu Subtotal)	(39,571)	(52.38)	(3,063)	(26.34)	(2,324,285)	(58.12)
Untouch- ables (Bhangi, Mochi, Dhed)	4,294	5.68	781	6.72	318,220	7.96
Other Hindus	4,222	5.59	1,275	10.97	189,466	4.74
<i>Muslim</i>	8,051	10.66	2,935	25.24	545,569	13.64
<i>Jain</i>	4,894	6.48	443	3.81	203,626	5.09
<i>Other Religions</i> (Christian, Parsi)	18	0.02	412	3.54	2,425	0.06
TOTAL						
POPULATION	75,540	100.00	11,627	99.99	3,999,250	100.00

SOURCE: *Census of India, 1931*, X, W.I.S.A., II, pp. 282-301

hearing cases and signing judgments. Such a concentration of powers in the hands of one man was typical for most Kathiawar states, and could easily be abused. In the case of Rajkot during Lakhajiraj's reign, however, the system worked efficiently and beneficently. The Thakore could be approached with appeals and could revise *Hazur* Court orders. Rajkot's subjects, by all accounts, felt their administration to be nearby, visible, and capable of being at least petitioned.

But Lakhajiraj is best remembered in Rajkot for his encouragement of popular participation in government. In 1923 he inaugurated the Rajkot Praja Pratanidhi Sabha ('Rajkot Peoples' Representative Assembly'). Its constitution is worth examination, for its later demise was an indirect cause of the 1938-9 satyagraha. The Representative Assembly consisted of ninety members elected every three years on the basis of universal adult franchise. Any male or female over twenty-one, resident in Rajkot state for a year or more and holding landed property or carrying on business had a right to vote or stand as a candidate. For the purpose of election, the people were divided into six vocational groups: traders, agriculturalists, labourers and artisans, priests, professionals, and 'other citizens'. In forty-three electorates, most co-extensive with the census circles of 1921, groups of 300 voters in each of these categories were allowed to return one representative. The result was an assembly consisting of:

traders	9
farmers	22
labourers-artisans	31
priests	2
professionals	1
other citizens	25
	<hr/>
	90

The progressive aspect of the Sabha lay in the fact that it was completely elected; elsewhere in Kathiawar, in the few states where they did exist, assemblies were filled with nominated officials. It should not be concluded, however, that as a result of its vocation-based composition, the Sabha accurately reflected Rajkot society. Table I:2 (which should be compared with I:1) indicates the distribution of caste and community among the ninety Sabha members



sitting in 1929. The Sabha contained representatives of a dozen castes or communities, but members of three 'advanced' Hindu castes—the Brahmins, Vantias, and Lohanas—along with those of the Jain community, held 59 (66%) of its seats.

TABLE I:2

*The Distribution of Caste and Community in the Rajkot  
Praja Pratanidhi Sabha, 1929*

Vocational Group	Seats	Vania &						
		Brahmin.	Jain	Lohana	Muslim	Rajput	Kanbi	Other
Business	9	—	5	3	1	—	—	—
Agriculturalist	22	3	2	1	1	1	11	3
Labourers/ Artisans	31	9	8	1	4	1	1	6
Priests	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Professionals	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Other Citizens	25	7	13	4	—	1	—	—
	90	20	30	9	6	3	12	9

SOURCE: Names of Sabha members have been taken from Rajkot state. *Sansthan Rajkotni Direktri*, I, pp. 128–31. In all but a few cases it has been easy, by examination of surnames, to determine the caste or community of each member. While it is possible to distinguish Vania and Jain members from the rest, it is impossible to distinguish Vantias from Jains, who frequently have similar surnames.

All preparation of legislation was entrusted to related interest groups, each with its own organization and constitution. A Merchants' Chamber, with 55 city members and 20 members from the rural mahals, made recommendations on trade. The Khedut Maha Sabha ('Grand Assembly of Agriculturalists') comprising the patels (headmen) of each village panchayat, the agriculturalists elected to the Assembly and revenue officers, met annually to discuss problems of cultivation and revenue. A Majur Maha Mandal ('Grand Association of Labourers') with 305 members representing the labourers of the state, met twice annually. A Kala-Kaushalya Sabha ('Assembly of Artisans and Craftsmen') with 350 members also met biannually. The Akhil Dharma Sabha ('Assembly of All Religions') was presided over by Lakhajiraj himself. Each interest group organization presented resolutions to the Representative Assembly. The Assembly, meeting every three months for four to

eight days, discussed the resolutions, proposed new laws, and questioned state administrators on their work. Its resolutions were submitted to a Dhara Sabha ('Legislative Assembly') of eighteen members, elected from within the Representative Assembly, which drafted recommendatory legislation. The latter was finally presented to the Thakore Saheb, who could accept or reject it, as he saw fit. Once a state law was signed by the Thakore Saheb, the responsibility for overseeing its implementation lay with the relevant interest group.

Lakhajiraj's Rajkot Praja Pratanidhi Sabha, while progressive in its use of the elective principle, was in practice a modernized durbar. The representatives of the various economic interests usually assembled to hear a speech from the Thakore Saheb, to deliberate, and to make recommendations, none of which were binding on the prince. The fact that all interests were at least nominally represented in the Assembly continued the traditional emphasis on consensus and accommodation. In the benevolent hands of Lakhajiraj, however, popular participation became legitimized in Rajkot politics, and the right to air grievances was firmly established.

Lakhajiraj died on 2 February 1930. Rajkot having experienced the best, was now to have the worst of princely rule. If Lakhajiraj had any fault, it was the overindulgence of his son and heir, Dharmendrasinhji, aged twenty-two. Dharmendrasinhji was the despair of the Political Service. In 1928, *en route* to Highgate School in London, he jumped ship in Marseilles, lingered about there and in Paris, and contracted venereal disease. Summoned home, he defied his father openly. Shortly after Lakhajiraj's death, E.H. Kealy, the Resident in Rajkot, informed New Delhi:

Ever since the boy's return to Rajkot he has done nothing but sow his wild oats, and has acquired a very unsavoury reputation for women, and wine, and has figured, I understand, in more than one disreputable affair in the State which is well known to the public. He has had no education since he returned to India nor any training of any sort in administrative work.<sup>21</sup>

For fourteen months, while British tutors attempted to bring Dharmendrasinhji into line, Rajkot was brought under a Council of Administration consisting of the Diwan and a retired Deputy Political Agent. On 21 April 1931, the young Thakore Saheb was invested with full ruling powers. Six months later, he abruptly

dismissed the Council, and announced that he would rule directly through the palace secretariat. But in fact, the prince had become so preoccupied with the pursuit of pleasure that his Diwan, Durbar Virawala, became the effective ruler of Rajkot.

For over six years (1932–8), the people of Rajkot grumbled about the iniquities of the palace, but did nothing. The Pratanidhi Sabha lapsed into disuse, but few protests were heard. In 1933, to meet the cost of the Thakore's squandering of the state's wealth, an *ijara* (monopoly) for the sale of sugar was sold to a local merchant. The subsequent rise in price brought complaints, but little direct action.<sup>22</sup> In view of the later intensity of the struggle against the prince, why did it take so long to mobilize popular sentiment against princely rule in Rajkot?

### *The Nationalist Movement in Kathiawar*

To answer this question requires a retrospective glance at the development of the nationalist movement in Rajkot and in Kathiawar, a development which must, in turn, be seen against the larger background of the changing policy of the Indian National Congress towards the princely states.<sup>23</sup> The attitudes taken by British Indian nationalists toward the princes were always mixed. Some, like Jawaharlal Nehru, had no sympathy for what they termed 'probably the extremest type of autocracy existing in the world.'<sup>24</sup> Others could not justify an attack on the princes when the British were the main enemy. Their reasons differed, however. Some, like Gandhi, had a nostalgic view of the Indian prince as a 'trustee' of the people and a custodian of India's traditional culture, and even hoped to enlist the princes' support in the nationalist movement.<sup>25</sup> Others, who carried no brief for autocracy, argued that once India rid herself of British rule, the princes would capitulate—'like apples falling from a tree when the trunk is shaken'. This view, frequently voiced by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, suggested practical wisdom: the Congress could not afford to take on more than one enemy at a time. Until the states' peoples themselves displayed some initiative, moreover, it would be risky to commit Congress resources and prestige to what might be a futile effort.

As regards the Western India States, Patel and other British Gujarat nationalist leaders doubted in the mid-1930s whether the peoples of Kathiawar were ready for the nationalist struggle. Their misgivings were based on the knowledge that the struggle would be

more difficult in the Kathiawar states, where the Congress was in most cases outlawed. States like Nawanagar, Junagadh, or Gondal would not allow even public meetings or the distribution of nationalist literature. Also punishment of nationalist satyagrahis in princely jails would probably be less restrained than in British Indian jails. But the attitude of British Indian leaders stemmed primarily from a recognition of their own superior political training. Thanks to cumulative political reforms which allowed them increasing participation in public policy formation, British Gujarat nationalists enjoyed at least a generation's lead over their Kathiawar counterparts in electoral and mobilizational politics. As veterans of six major satyagrahas<sup>26</sup> they knew the kind of disciplined sacrifice that was required to sustain the struggle against the raj. Put bluntly, they doubted the princely state peoples' capacity to fight.

In a few states fledgling groups of nationalists had begun to form Praja Mandals ('Peoples' Associations') or Parishads ('Conferences'). The first of these was formed in western India's largest principality, Baroda, in 1917. Meanwhile, a small group of nationalists in Kathiawar began to chafe against the fact of their relative political impotence. Many had been politically socialized in British Gujarat or Bombay, either by receiving higher education there, or through participation in Congress activities. The man credited with the founding of the Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad ('Kathiawar Political Conference') was Mansukhlal Ravjibhai Mehta, a younger brother of Gandhi's near-guru Raychandbhai.<sup>27</sup> Born at Vavania in the Kathiawari state of Morvi, Mehta belonged to a Jain family which had made a fortune in the jewellery business in Bombay. Following Gandhi's return from South Africa and his tour of Gondal and Rajkot in 1915, Mehta began to write articles in a Bombay Gujarati newspaper decrying 'Kathiawar's misery'. Through his journalism he met Amritlal Sheth, a magistrate of Limbdi, and together they began to discuss the possibilities of 'an institution to represent the needs of the people'. Originally named the Kathiawar Hitavardhak Sabha ('Kathiawar Welfare Promotion Council'), the Parishad emphasized social more than political reform. Mehta's jeweller relationship with Lakhajiraj brought permission to hold the first Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad conference in Rajkot in 1921, presided over by Vithalbhai Patel of British Gujarat.<sup>28</sup> Lakhajiraj, who was proud of the fame Gandhi, a 'son of Rajkot', had acquired in South Africa, donated land in the heart of



Rajkot city for a National School which became the headquarters for nationalist activity in Kathiawar. He encouraged the Parishad by attending its sessions in Rajkot and Bhavnagar (1925) and, at the cost of the British Resident's displeasure, adopted the symbolism of the swadeshi movement by wearing khadi clothing.<sup>29</sup>

Mansukhlal Mehta died in 1924. The Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad remained, on paper at least, the apex body for the movement, while state Parishads were formed in the few states like Rajkot, Bhavnagar, and Wadhwan, where nationalist activity was allowed. But for the next dozen years, the nationalist movement in Kathiawar divided into three or four groups, each with a different ideological and tactical approach, and each associated with a different leader. This division reflected not only the political fragmentation of Kathiawar's states, but also the uncertainty of its emerging nationalist elite. None of these groups could claim to be representative of anything but the top stratum of Kathiawari society. Whereas the national movement in British Gujarat succeeded in attracting the Patidars and other middle peasant jatis and was heavily rural in its orientation soon after World War I, the nationalist movement in Kathiawar remained largely urban and high caste in social composition right up to independence. Among the activists, Brahmins and merchants predominated.<sup>30</sup> Kshatriyas were notably absent, because of their lineage connections and political sympathies with the princes. Kanbis and Kolis, the most numerous tenant cultivators, generally did not participate because of their economic vulnerability and socio-economic backwardness. Muslims and Harijans were rarer still.

Amritlal Sheth, the leader of the main nationalist current in Kathiawar, argued for agitation against the princely states through satyagrahas staged in neighbouring British Gujarat. He and his associates started a nationalist camp at Ranpur, over the border from Kathiawar in Ahmedabad district. From 1921 they published in Ranpur a weekly paper, *Saurashtra*, and distributed it all over the peninsula. During the Dandi satyagraha, Sheth and his followers 'made salt' on the shores of the Gulf of Cambay, near Dholka (also in Ahmedabad district), and courted mass arrest. Sheth disagreed with much of the strategy espoused by the British Indian nationalists, and rejected, for example, Gandhi's emphasis on spinning. He was angrily opposed, moreover, to any intervention by British Gujarat nationalist leaders in Kathiawari affairs. 'Sardar

*amara sardar nathi*'—'Sardar [Patel] is not our leader', he is said to have declared frequently. Such defiance could only work to Sheth's disadvantage, for by 1930 Vallabhbhai Patel completely dominated the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee. In any case, Sheth's political career was ruined by a homosexual scandal in 1934.<sup>31</sup> One of Sheth's associates, Balwantrai Mehta, went on to promote nationalist activity in his home state of Bhavnagar, and later acquired fame for his leadership in the All-India States' Peoples Conference. But Mehta's association with Sheth and his connections with Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress Socialists cost him Sardar Patel's opposition and limited his effectiveness in Kathiawar politics.

A second group of nationalists in Kathiawar was associated with Phulchand Shah, a Vania from Limbdi who had participated in the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha of 1923. Shah, mainly remembered for his stubbornness and righteous indignation, advocated the use of non-cooperation tactics directly against the princes. During 1929–32, he led a number of non-violent forays into the states of Maliya, Dhrol, Morvi, Bhavnagar, and Dhrangadhra.<sup>32</sup> Arousing national consciousness among the local inhabitants, these efforts also served to stiffen the resistance of the princes, and to exhibit the weakness of the fragmented Kathiawari movement. Shah's group began to disperse by 1935, when Shah himself became bedridden with tuberculosis.

The third group, consisting of fewer, and even more widely scattered individuals, was formed of leftists under the leadership of Vrajlal ('Vajubhai') Shukla of Rajkot, a Congress Socialist who later became a communist trade union organizer. Apart from Shukla, the leftists of Kathiawar were mainly concentrated in Bhavnagar. Uncompromisingly opposed to the 'feudalism' of the princely order, they found common cause with the mainstream of the Kathiawar nationalists towards the end of the 1930s. In the free enterprise environment of princely Kathiawar, however, they gained little by way of a popular following and remained intellectuals without an organized mass base.

The fourth group, which might be called the Gandhian group because its members obeyed Mahatma Gandhi's injunction not to oppose the princes, did not find a leader or coalesce for political action until 1936. Concentrating on Gandhian social change methods, these 'constructive workers' strove to promote the causes

of Harijan uplift, the khaddar programme (cottage industries, especially spinning), the welfare of women, prohibition, literacy, and so on. Their numbers grew as they were joined by the disenchanted remnants of Amritlal Sheth's and Phulchand Shah's groups. When the Gandhian group finally found their all-Kathiawar leader in Ucchurangrai Navalshanker ('U.N.') Dhebar, they became the most effective of any of the nationalist groups in Kathiawar.

Originally from Nawanagar, Dhebar practised law in Rajkot, with many minor Kathiawari princes among his clientele. He had close friends among the Gandhians, but initially stayed aloof from the Parishad. Both by instinct and intellectual persuasion, Dhebar leaned away from confrontational politics:

Like Bapu, I felt that the Indian temperament was best suited to Tolstoy. I was not for a class struggle approach where rulers are condemned. I felt that first we must let the people know about the real character of imperialism and how it was grinding us down.<sup>33</sup>

Only thirty-one when he met Sardar Patel at the 1936 all-India Congress session at Faizabad, Dhebar impressed the all-India leader with his self-effacement, his conservatism, and his unswerving loyalty. It was not long afterward that he became Patel's trusted lieutenant in the Kathiawar freedom struggle.

In sum, it was the divisiveness and the weak mass base of the Kathiawar nationalist movement which left Dharmendrasinhji virtually unopposed until 1936. There was a growing determination among Rajkot's Gandhian workers to come out in protest. As if waiting for a signal, however, they did not act. Events were soon to show that the signal had to come from British India. Not until the larger issue of Congress intervention in the princely states was settled could the Rajkot satyagraha begin.

### *The Haripura Congress: A New Policy Emerges*

On an all-India basis, the nationalist movement was at a low ebb in the mid-1930s. Within the Congress High Command a disagreement had developed over whether to go along with the changes embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935.<sup>34</sup> In particular, the issue of federation, as it was proposed in the Act, divided the Gandhian moderates who were in favour of federation, from the radicals led by Subhas Chandra Bose, who were adamantly opposed to it. The dissension fed on many ideological and personal differences between the followers of Gandhi and of Bose.<sup>35</sup> What is of

importance here is that it had a direct effect on the decision of the Congress to intervene in the princely states.

Eventually, the federation proposed in the 1935 Act was defeated by the unwillingness of the princes to enter it. In February 1938, however, when the Haripura session of the All-India Congress Committee opened in Surat District, Gujarat, the fate of federation still hung in the balance. The viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, was endeavouring to persuade the princes to join the federation, believing that this was the only way to grant the constitutional demands of the Congress at the centre and still maintain a conservative bulwark against the Congress.<sup>36</sup> The princes were proving sceptical; they sought firm assurances that the raj would uphold their individual autonomy, and protect them from Congress agitation. Meanwhile, for the Congress, the new opportunities presented by the 1935 Act and the demands of the princely state nationalists led to a reconsideration at Haripura of the old Congress policy of not interfering in the princely states. Chief among the new opportunities was the fact that following the election of 1936-7 in British India, the Congress controlled ministries in several provinces adjacent to princely states. Control of Home Ministries, in particular, would be crucial in determining the rate at which British Indian nationalists could aid with impunity the princely state nationalists.

At Haripura, the new policy ostensibly reflected pressure by the states' peoples to play their full role in the independence struggle, and the sympathetic response of the British Indian leaders, encouraging their efforts to achieve responsible government.<sup>37</sup> The larger significance of the new policy, however, was that it would legitimize attempts by individual Pradesh Congress Committees to establish Congress control over the Praja Mandals of the princely states within their linguistic regions. The object was clear: should the federal constitution be put fully into effect, either Congress-inspired Praja Mandal activity would serve to intimidate the princes, forcing them to support Congress policy through their representatives in parliament, or where the states could be induced to allow popular election of representatives, Congressmen themselves would be returned to parliament from princely state constituencies. Should Congress not begin to intervene in the princely states, many argued, other political organizations, possibly communal or extremist ones, undoubtedly would.

The latter consideration, I would argue, was uppermost in the



minds of members of the Gandhian wing of the Congress in mid-1938, not only with regard to extremists outside Congress, but also to what was perceived as the extremist threat within the movement posed by Subhas Chandra Bose. Bose had been elected president of the Haripura session of the AICC. Intervention in the princely states would, for the Gandhian wing, provide an opportunity to broaden their base within the Congress and win back the control which the radicals had gained under Bose. Failure to do so would allow Bose to strengthen his influence on the movement and its policy. What the Gandhian wing needed was an entry point into the princely states, where a dramatic struggle fought on behalf of the states' peoples would afford them support-winning publicity and an opportunity to show that their nationalist policy was effective. As 1938 ended it became clear that Rajkot would provide the entry point, the struggle, and the opportunity.

### *The Choice of Rajkot*

A number of factors combined to make Rajkot state an ideal location for the first post-Haripura struggle against princely rule. First, its capital was the seat of the British Residency in the Western India States Agency: a struggle waged against the prince in Rajkot could only be construed as a challenge to the whole Agency. Rajkot would be more vulnerable to nationalist pressure than most princely states because of its small size: indeed, the whole of the Agency stood weakened by its unequalled fragmentation of jurisdiction. To draw attention to Kathiawar would be to draw attention to the obsolescence of the 'frozen wave' and to expose one of the weakest components in the structure of paramountcy.

Rajkot and Kathiawar, meanwhile, enjoyed advantages which encouraged the start of civil agitation. Kathiawar, thanks to the princely penchant for developing 'showcase' cities, was the most urbanized part of either British or princely India, and Rajkot was the most urbanized salute state in Kathiawar.<sup>38</sup> Rajkot, moreover, had the largest immigrant population of any of the salute states, and by Kathiawar standards, a high proportion of its workers in industry.<sup>39</sup> These factors, coupled with their high literacy rate, mentioned earlier, combined to make Rajkot's citizenry the most socially mobile in Kathiawar.

A further consideration for the nationalists was the fact that Rajkot city contained the British-governed civil station. The exis-

tence of this territory, jurisdictionally a part of British Bombay, made it possible for Kathiawari nationalists based in the civil station to make forays into princely territory and retreat to safety before the state police could be mobilized. The citizens of the civil station, moreover, were regarded as the most politically conscious of the peninsula. Many nationalists among them had already taken active part in the salt satyagraha of 1930 and could be counted on for support in the anti-princely struggle.

A special historical circumstance helped clinch the choice of Rajkot as the site of the satyagraha. This was the fact alluded to earlier, that Mahatma Gandhi had lived in Rajkot for nearly thirteen years (1875–88), during six of which (1875–81) his father was Diwan of Rajkot.<sup>40</sup> Having spent his adolescence in Rajkot and having received most of his formal education there, Gandhi probably regarded Rajkot as home. As his relationship with Thakore Saheb Dharmendrasinhji during the satyagraha reveals, he considered himself to have a special hold on the princely durbar by virtue of his father's service to Bawajiraj, the father of Lakhajiraj. Gandhi's wife, Kasturba, the daughter of a Rajkot merchant named Gokaldas Makanji, had even helped in the arrangement of Dharmendrasinhji's marriage. So intimate had been the Mahatma's relationship with Rajkot that he must have felt confident that he could exert his influence there.

Mostly, however, it was Lakhajiraj who had made the Rajkot satyagraha possible by affording his subjects seven years of quasi-responsible government. The habit of political participation he had implanted had created a determined band of nationalists in Rajkot. Dharmendrasinhji, meanwhile, provided the justification for the satyagraha by nullifying his father's political progressiveness. The nationalists would be hard put to find a more convenient symbol of princely reaction anywhere else in India.

In the end, the choice of Rajkot as the site for the satyagraha was Sardar Patel's and Mahatma Gandhi's. In Rajkot they felt they could control the agitation and make it effective. They knew the Kathiawar leaders well and spoke the local language. But how would the ordinary people of Rajkot respond? Or the prince, or the British government? Could the nationalist movement of British India be transferred to the princely states?

### *The Struggle Begins*

Tension between the people of Rajkot and the Rajkot durbar,

presided over by the Thakore Saheb, Dharmendrasinhji, and his Diwan, Virawala, gradually built to a climax in August 1938. The first sign of struggle had emerged in 1936, when a strike at the state cotton mill was launched to secure better working conditions for the mill labourers. The main leader, Jethalal Joshi, a Gandhian worker from the National School formed a labour union of nearly 800 members.<sup>41</sup> After a twenty-one day struggle, the durbar was forced to concede the union's demands. Emboldened by this success, and encouraged by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Joshi and U.N. Dhebar convened in March 1937 the first meeting of the Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad to be held in eight years.<sup>42</sup> Fifteen thousand people attended. Carefully observing Gandhi's dictum that particular rajas should not be criticized, the Parishad nonetheless adopted a resolution urging the princely states to grant responsible government. Other resolutions called for a reduction in state spending and a rationalization of the rural taxation system.

The response of the Rajkot durbar seemed calculated to flout these demands. Rather than curb his prince's profligacy, Virawala sold new *ijaras* ('monopolies') on matches, rice, and cinemas to increase state revenue. A monopoly over gambling at the Gokulashtami fair was sold to a disreputable outfit called 'Carnival'. When Parishad workers organized a protest at the fair on 15 August 1938, they were charged first by civil station and then Rajkot state police and beaten severely with lathis. A complete hartal ensued in Rajkot city. On 5 September, a session of the Rajkot Praja Parishad was held, presided over by Sardar Patel.<sup>43</sup> Afterwards, in a meeting with Virawala, Patel put forward the Parishad's demands for the establishment of a committee to draw up reforms leading to responsible government. In addition, he demanded 1) a new election of the defunct Rajkot Praja Pratanidhi Sabha; 2) the fixing of a limit on withdrawal from the state treasury by the ruler; 3) reduction of land revenue by 15%; and 4) the cancellation of all *ijaras*.

Patel's approach was direct confrontation; the durbar responded with intrigue. Virawala instructed the Thakore to relieve him of the Diwanship and to make him his private adviser. In his place, a request was made for Sir Patrick Cadell, a seventy-two-year-old ex-Diwan of Junagadh, to become Diwan of Rajkot and deal firmly with the public agitation. Virawala thereby displaced criticism of the durbar on to a rather hapless British officer and forced the Resident, Edmund C. Gibson, to come to the state's rescue.<sup>44</sup>

Cadell, arriving from England on 12 September, quickly became disenchanted with the attitude and life style of the prince. The Thakore and Virawala, equally disenchanted with Cadell, complained to Gibson that the new Diwan was not dealing effectively with the agitation. Although he still had Gibson's support, Cadell soon found himself opposed by both the durbar and the public.

The satyagraha, meanwhile, was proving to be highly effective. It included a run on the state bank, a strike at the state cotton mill, a strike by students, a campaign to stop payment of land revenue, and boycotts of electricity, of goods sold under the *ijaras*, and of all products of the state mills. During most of this period, Sardar Patel was in Ahmedabad or Bombay, but he was in touch with the Rajkot leaders by telephone every evening.<sup>45</sup> Although he repeatedly urged outsiders to leave the struggle to the people of Rajkot, he himself watched closely over the development of the satyagraha and did most of the negotiating with the durbar. As the agitation picked up tempo, groups of nationalist volunteers began arriving from all parts of Kathiawar and also from British Gujarat and Bombay. The Sardar's own daughter, Manibhen, and other prominent British Gujarat nationalists participated. The coordination of effort was remarkable. A secret chain of command ensured that if any leader were arrested, tactical direction would fall into another's hands.<sup>46</sup> In order to avoid arrests, code numbers were published in Bombay newspapers which, when delivered throughout Kathiawar, alerted each satyagrahi as to his arrival date and bivouac arrangements in Rajkot.<sup>47</sup>

On 28 September 1938, the durbar abolished the *ijaras*, promised to define the civil list of the Thakore in the budget, and appointed a special officer to re-examine the land assessment rates. But these concessions seemed only to intensify the struggle. In early November, the durbar banned all meetings, processions, and picketing demonstrations, but these orders were repeatedly defied by large crowds, leading to lathi charges and arrests. On 8 November, the Thakore offered to reopen the question of popular control over the state's administration, and by 8 December, he agreed to grant control of 'nation building' departments to a minister responsible to the Praja Pratanidhi Sabha. The Sabha was to be reconstituted and reconvened and 'the widest powers' were to be entrusted to it.<sup>48</sup> But even as the Thakore appeared to grant concessions, the target of attack changed to Cadell, as a 'reactionary agent'



of the imperial power. A huge petition was circulated for his removal.

The Rajkot satyagraha was by now gaining much attention in the rest of India, and in Britain as well. Lord Linlithgow, the viceroy, feared wide ramifications:

I have little doubt that if Congress were to win in the Rajkot case the movement would go right through Kathiawad, and that they would then extend their activities in other directions . . . Congress in taking the line they are taking . . . are . . . concerned . . . to ensure, by bringing about a weakening [? of] Princes' attitude on the question of election of States' representative to the Federal Assembly, a greater prospect of a Congress majority in the first Federal Parliament . . . The difficulty is to make the Princes see clearly the strengthening of their position which would result from their entry into the Federation, and the extent to which it is to their interest to stand together and play their cards properly. Up to a limited point, pressure on the Princes . . . may be positively helpful so far as achieving Federation goes. But if carried as far as Patel is endeavouring to carry it in Rajkot, it will have the reverse effect, create a panic among the Princes, and . . . put off Federation for a long time.<sup>49</sup>

By the end of November 1938, it became clear that the Rajkot durbar wanted a settlement, and was prepared, despite the Political Department's opposition, to go directly to Sardar Patel for it. A series of secret negotiations began, first between Patel and Cadell, and then, unknown to Cadell, between Patel and Virawala. Finally, when a settlement seemed within reach, Patel arrived suddenly in Rajkot by plane on Christmas Day 1938, and requested an interview with the Thakore. Without informing either Gibson or Cadell, Dharmendrasinhji received Patel and, in company with other officials of the durbar, including Virawala, worked on the details of the agreement until one o'clock in the morning. In its essentials, the agreement called for a cessation of the satyagraha in return for an undertaking by the prince to limit his privy purse and to set up a committee of ten state subjects or officials who would recommend reforms 'so as to give the widest possible powers to [the] people, consistent with [the prince's] obligation to the paramount power and with [his] prerogatives as a ruling chief.'<sup>50</sup> The agreement, published by the durbar on 26 December, was accompanied by a subsidiary understanding given by the Thakore in a letter to Sardar Patel: 'It is agreed that seven members of the Committee . . . are to be recommended by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and they are to be nominated by us.'<sup>51</sup> The Thakore Saheb thanked the Sardar for his

peacemaking efforts, and the agitation in Rajkot immediately ended. All the satyagrahis jailed during the struggle were promptly released. The nationalists congratulated the Sardar and themselves on a significant victory.

Furious memoranda by the Resident, Gibson, reporting to New Delhi, and by the Political Secretary, Sir Bertrand Glancy, reporting to London, indicated the raj's consternation over the durbar's 'complete defeat'.<sup>52</sup> A series of telegrams from the viceroy to the secretary of state reveals that the next moves were of British inspiration.<sup>53</sup> First, since Sir Patrick Cadell's position had become untenable, he resigned and left Rajkot; he was immediately replaced as Diwan by Durbar Virawala. Secondly, the Thakore Saheb was told not to submit to Sardar Patel's dictation regarding the staffing of the reforms committee, but to select suitable persons himself and show the names to the Resident before the committee was constituted. Finally, Virawala was told to ask for the loan of Khan Saheb Fateh Mohammed, the much-feared deputy superintendent of the Agency Police, as commissioner of police for Rajkot state.

Thus, when Sardar Patel submitted the names of seven Praja Parishad candidates to the durbar, their expected nomination by the Thakore did not ensue. Patel's list contained only Brahmins and Vaniyas. The durbar accepted only four of them, and suggested that in order to recognize all classes of Rajkot subjects, representatives of the Rajput, Muslim, and depressed communities should also be included. Especially galling to Sardar Patel was the rejection of his recommendation for committee chairman, U.N. Dhebar, whom the durbar had excluded along with the other rejectees because he was not born in Rajkot. Patel's response was immediate. The durbar's 'flagrant breach of a solemn settlement' left but one course for the people of Rajkot: 'to resume the self-chosen course of suffering for vindicating their liberty and saving Rajkot and the Thakore Saheb from ruin'.<sup>54</sup>

Thus on 26 January 1939, the struggle resumed, and this time, quickly turned ugly. The durbar now under Virawala's direction, issued ordinances banning all nationalist newspapers and meetings, and punishing with imprisonment, fines, or confiscation of property all who participated in or aided the agitation. A force of seventy mounted police loaned to the state by the Agency, now patrolled the city.<sup>55</sup> In addition to the resumption of lathi charges on demon-

strators, more sinister reports of terrorizing activities by Fateh Mohammed's police began to be heard.

By early February 1939, tales of such alleged atrocities and further reports of torture and hunger strikes in the state's crowded jails began to reach Wardha. Much moved by the plight of friends in her adopted home town, Kasturba Gandhi, accompanied by Maniben Patel, journeyed to Rajkot only to be arrested and detained in a village sixteen miles away.<sup>56</sup> Subsequently, the Mahatma himself began to bombard the Rajkot durbar with telegrams. Receiving no satisfactory reply to his demands for an explanation, he suddenly announced on 25 February 1939 that he too was going to Rajkot.

### *The Mahatma Intervenes*

On 10 March 1939 the annual All-India Congress Committee session was to begin in Tripuri, Assam. In view of the imminence of war in Europe, the controversy over the federal constitution, and the deepening split between the Gandhi and Bose wings of the nationalist movement, this was to be a momentous meeting. A month earlier, on 29 January 1939, the Gandhian wing had received a setback when Subhas Chandra Bose was re-elected president of the Congress. The Gandhian wing's defeated candidate, Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya from Mysore, was not widely known. But in view of the policy crisis over the federation and princely state issues, it cannot have been accidental that Sitaramayya was the first princely state nationalist to be nominated for AICC president. Had Sitaramayya won the presidency, the Congress' course on federation and princely state policy would have been clear. Now there was stalemate and uncertainty. On 9 February, the Working Committee met at Wardha and, in the absence of Bose, who was ill, thirteen of the fifteen members submitted their resignations. The Tripuri session promised to be explosive.

Thus Gandhi's decision to go to Rajkot was highly significant. To be absent from Tripuri would serve as a silent rebuke to the Bose wing of the movement: while Congressmen argued in Tripuri, Gandhi would be acting out his moral convictions in Rajkot.<sup>57</sup> Or, if the Rajkot affair could be resolved quickly and successfully, Gandhi could then proceed to Tripuri and be received as the man whose intervention in Rajkot had resulted in a great victory on behalf of the people of the Indian states. In view of his personal connection

with Rajkot, Gandhi perhaps felt confident that his intervention would produce speedy results.<sup>58</sup>

At his own command, the agitation was stopped in advance of Gandhi's arrival in Rajkot on 27 February; this forestalled a plan to arrest him at the railway station. He put forward a proposal to Virawala that one Rajput and two Muslim representatives might be included on the reforms committee, if the Parishad representatives be correspondingly increased in number. As an alternative, he suggested that the three official members not have a right to vote. In either case, Gandhi acknowledged, the object was to gain a majority for the Parishad. While these proposals were being considered by the durbar, Gandhi inspected Rajkot's jails and listened to the stories of victims of alleged atrocities. After two and a half days of such investigations and talks with the Thakore, Virawala, and Gibson, Gandhi abruptly announced that unless the original understanding given by the Thakore to Sardar Patel was honoured, he would begin a fast unto death on 3 March. In his ultimatum, Gandhi gave full vent to his impatience:

At the time of leaving Wardha, I had resolved that I would not leave Rajkot without inducing fulfilment of your promise. But I never thought that I would have to be here for more than one or two days, or that I would have to suffer what I have suffered. My patience is exhausted. I should hasten to Tripuri if it is at all possible. If I do not go, over a thousand co-workers will be disappointed and lakhs of poor people will become disconsolate. Time, therefore, has a special value for me at this juncture. I beseech you, therefore, to adopt with a full heart the following suggestions of mine, and free me from anxiety by speeding me on my return journey tomorrow.<sup>59</sup>

On 3 March, even as Gandhi was beginning his pre-fast commencement ceremony, the Thakore Saheb replied in the negative, regretting that he could not divest himself of his responsibility of 'ensuring that the committee consist of suitable members truly representative of various interests in the State'. Gandhi, nearing seventy, had not undertaken a political fast since his opposition to Ramsay Macdonald's communal award in 1932. His heart condition lent extra urgency to the crisis. On 4 March, Gandhi dictated a letter to the Resident, arguing that conditions in Rajkot were so 'chaotic' that immediate intervention by the paramount power was necessary.<sup>60</sup> And as cables began pouring in to the office of the viceroy in New Delhi, it was not long before the viceroy had to act. The same day, the governor of Bombay reported a hartal, large



meetings, and adjournment of the Legislative Council; on 5 March, 'beginnings of a mass hysteria... particularly among the Gujaratis.'<sup>61</sup> Perhaps what influenced Linlithgow most, however, were reports from the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, and Bihar, as well as Bombay, that the provincial ministries were preparing to resign *en masse*. On 6 March, just as Subhas Chandra Bose was leaving Calcutta for the Congress session, it was rumoured that the resignations would be handed in at Tripuri.<sup>62</sup> Finally, on 7 March, with Gandhi sinking into dizziness and nausea, the viceroy found a solution. Responding to Gandhi's charge of a 'breach of faith' by the Thakore, the viceroy suggested the arbitration of the Chief Justice of India, Sir Maurice Gwyer, in the question of whether the 26 December agreement had in fact been broken. At 2.15 p.m. on 7 March, Gandhi broke his fast. All the satyagrahis imprisoned during the agitation were released the same day.

### *Victory and Defeat*

Throughout India (and especially in Tripuri) Gandhi's fast was hailed as an immense success. But in Rajkot Gandhi found to his surprise that there was no change of heart on the part of either the Thakore Saheb or Durbar Virawala. On 3 April 1939, when Gwyer handed down his judgment upholding Sardar Patel's contention that the Thakore had agreed to accept the Parishad's nominees, congratulations were again heaped on both Gandhi and Patel for their persistence in obtaining justice.<sup>63</sup> The durbar, however, remained unmoved. Instead of conceding the Sardar's demand, Virawala found a new twist by which to dodge around it. When Gandhi had first come to Rajkot, he had agreed in principle that Rajputs and Muslims should be represented on the reforms committee, and he had written his agreement in a letter to the Rajputs' caste association. Now Virawala insisted that this agreement be honoured, and that a representative of the depressed classes also be included in the list of nominees.

To add force to the demand, the Rajputs and Muslims of Rajkot staged an angry 'black flag' demonstration during Gandhi's prayer hour at the National School on 16 April, and, charging him with breach of promise, threatened to launch their own satyagraha. Virawala had clearly turned the tables on the Mahatma. In the end, the Thakore Saheb rejected six out of the seven names proposed by the Parishad on the grounds that they were not residents of Rajkot

and because Rajput, Muslim, and depressed class representatives had been excluded. Rejecting the Mahatma's claim that the Parishad should have a majority, the Thakore wrote to Gandhi that 'the matter of primary importance is not to secure a majority for any particular party but to ensure that a really representative committee, effectively representing the various interests in the State, may now be set up consisting of persons fully qualified to undertake the very responsible duties which will devolve on them'.<sup>64</sup>

Gandhi tried to negotiate with the Rajput, Muslim, and depressed communities, but Virawala had convinced them that their interests would be endangered by a committee composed mainly of Brahmin or Vania Parishad representatives. Soon not only local leaders were protesting the 'injustice' of Gandhi's claim, but national leaders—Mohammed Ali Jinnah for the Muslims, and Dr B.R. Ambedkar for the depressed classes—were clamouring for separate representation of their communities.<sup>65</sup>

And finally, the anti-climax: on 17 May 1939, Gandhi announced that he was defeated by Virawala and publicly renounced the Chief Justice's award. His fast, he now admitted, had been tainted by *himsa* ('violence'):

In taking the fast I sought immediate intervention of paramount power so as to induce fulfilment of the promise made by the Thakore Saheb. This was not the way of Ahimsa or conversion . . . My fast to be pure should have been addressed only to the Thakore Saheb, and I should have been content to die, if I could not have melted his heart or rather that of his adviser, Durbar Shri Virawala.<sup>66</sup>

Gandhi apologized to all his opponents: the Rajputs, the Muslims, the prince and Virawala, the Resident, the Chief Justice, even the viceroy. Rajkot, he said, had been a 'priceless laboratory' for him. Convinced more than ever of the correctness of his original non-intervention policy, he returned to British India to prepare for the satyagrahas of the 1940s.<sup>67</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Why did the Rajkot satyagraha fail? Had Congress intervention in the Indian states been, in fact, a strategic error? Was Rajkot, in particular, the wrong place to stage a post-Haripura test of Indian nationalism in the princely context?

Gandhi's frustration in Rajkot does recall the adage about a prophet's being honoured in all save his own country, and it may be

that whereas elsewhere in India he might have overawed the local raja, in his native Kathiawar his familiarity reduced his psychological advantage. In fact, Gandhi got the worst of both worlds, all-India and local. His all-India fame made little impression on the prince or his Diwan.<sup>68</sup> His attempt to present himself as a 'son of Rajkot', meanwhile, had little effect either. It was clear to any onlooker in Rajkot that Gandhi had come from British India and would return there once his mission had been accomplished.

Perhaps the easiest explanation for Gandhi's failure is that he had quite simply been outwitted by Virawala. It would appear that while the intriguing Diwan and the reprobate prince provided ideal targets of villainy on which to focus both local and national opprobrium, they were also admired, in Kathiawar at least, for their diabolical cleverness in outmanoeuvring the Mahatma. 'There are as many twists in a Kathiawari's mind as there are in his turban,' says the local proverb. According to the princely political idiom, Virawala's intrigues constituted acceptable, even admirable behaviour.

Ultimately, the durbar could stand firm because of simple power realities. Once the Political Department determined to go all out to support the Thakore Saheb, the joint forces of the princely state and the paramount power could easily face down the threat of civil agitation. The viceroy's intervention brought impartial justice to bear on the case. Beyond that, the moral onus for satisfying Gandhi's demands lay with the prince alone; treaty obligations would justify no further British meddling in the Thakore's prerogatives. The British, in other words, could support the Thakore fully without being blamed for any of his misdeeds. The Thakore, for his part, could command that support because of the spectre, terrifying to the Political Service, of states crumbling before the Congress onslaught. It may be that Gandhi, ever the political realist, did not resume his fast because he recognized the futility of doing so with the odds against him.

What of Sardar Patel's conclusion, that the people of the princely states were not ready for the rigours of satyagraha? In view of the sacrifices made by Kathiawari nationalists prior to Gandhi's intervention, the charge seems hardly justified. Why blame the Rajkot workers for the failure of the satyagraha, when Sardar Patel retained control of the agitation, and, despite his many directives to the contrary, oversaw the intervention of many satyagrahis from

outside Rajkot? It may be said in support of Patel, however, that he recognized how tiny a fraction of the overall population of both Rajkot and Kathiawar had been mobilized for political action. The Rajkot agitation was confined, largely, to the urban middle class. The Kanbis and Kolis, who made up the bulk of the rural population, were virtually untouched by the entire affair.

Finally, Gandhi had been at fault in trying to coerce the durbar into accepting his demands and to force the paramount power to intervene. His impatience to win has been referred to earlier. Gandhi described his error as one of satyagraha technique: an impurity had entered his *ahimsa*. The award had not come from within the heart of the Thakore Saheb. One can accept this explanation, and yet wonder whether Gandhi would have discovered his error had he forced the Thakore to capitulate. Gandhi's fasts in British India had often been equally coercive.<sup>69</sup> However, in none of these had Gandhi afterwards discovered and repented his coercion. Rajkot showed clearly that the predisposition of the opponent against whom a satyagraha was launched determined the outcome as much as the motivation of the satyagrahi. And the opponent's predisposition depended heavily on his political environment. Thus it may be argued that in the princely context, where consensus was an ideal of political behaviour, a coercive fast, especially by an outsider, would be illegitimate. Moreover, the purpose underlying Gandhi's fast was less than valid in the princely context because only Brahmins and Vantias would win if the Parishad's claims were granted. Virawala's most clever stratagem was to portray the Mahatma as unjust because he would deny representation on the reforms committee to each of Rajkot's major social groups, especially the disadvantaged ones. In princely India one did not count up votes and majorities. Instead, one trusted the prince to accommodate as many affected interests as possible, to make consensual decisions, and govern for the benefit of all.

If the special political context and idiom of princely rule help explain the failure of the Rajkot satyagraha, they also illuminate characteristics of Indian nationalism in the princely states which were quite dissimilar from those found in British Indian nationalism. In the first place, where British Indian nationalism was unequivocal in its anti-imperialism, in princely India there was considerable confusion as to who the real enemy was. Some of the princely state nationalists had been politically socialized in British



India, by receiving their higher education there, or by participating in Congress campaigns, such as the salt satyagraha. Usually, the latter nationalists (for example, Amritlal Sheth) identified the British as the main enemy and consequently did little to change their own socio-political environment in the states. Meanwhile, those who attacked the princes (for example, Phulchand Shah) were being distracted by puppets while the real control lay with the puppeteer. The problem was made more complex by a strong residual sympathy for princely rule on the part of many princely state subjects, especially where the local raja was benevolent. And, while some communities in a state had reason to oppose their local prince, others had a vested interest in keeping him in power.

These elements of confused purpose added to the basic difficulty, especially prevalent in the Western India States Agency, of the fragmentation and parochialism of the princely state population. Whereas nationalists in next-door British Gujarat participated in the politics of the large, culturally diverse Bombay Presidency, Kathiawari nationalists worked within much more limited horizons. Whereas British Gujaratis (Sardar Patel is the archetype) learned to deal with the mass factor in politics, Kathiawari nationalists had first to transcend their own state concerns to think and act even on an all-Kathiawar basis. The fragmentation of the movement was exacerbated by the repressiveness of many of the rajas, who would not allow any political activity within their borders. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in a majority of the Kathiawar states the mobilizing effects of Indian nationalism were not felt until after independence.

If this was true on the horizontal plane, it was even more so on the vertical plane, in terms of the social strata affected by nationalist mobilization. The fact that nationalist recruitment in Kathiawar was restricted largely to the urban non-violent castes added, moreover, a particular colouring to the ideology of the movement. Apart from a small minority (exemplified by Vajubhai Shukla), most Kathiawari nationalists were conservative in outlook. The result could be seen in post-independence land reform when the Dhebar government endeavoured to mollify the princes and large landholders with a rate of compensation for surrendered land varying between three-and-a-half to five times the Indian average.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, the extent to which Indian nationalism in the princely context depended on outside sources for its nurture and direction

distinguishes it from the nationalism which grew in British India. This is largely because the development of nationalism in British India enjoyed at least a generation's lead over its princely state counterpart. In Kathiawar and the vast majority of princely states, nationalists developed a habit of looking to British Indian leaders for guidance and support. This habit was clearly evidenced in the relationship between Sardar Patel and the Rajkot satyagrahis. The fact that the Rajkot struggle stopped abruptly once Gandhi renounced the Gwyer award also illustrates the dependency. Its most significant manifestation lay, however, in the connection between the Rajkot satyagraha and intra-Congress political considerations underlying policy formation at Haripura and Tripuri. Nationalism in princely India was not allowed its own free development because the political interest of nationalist leaders in the parent movement often forbade it. Princely Indian nationalism was as dependent on British Indian nationalism, in effect, as the princes were on the British raj.

Despite these problems—all of them attributable to the divergent historical legacies of British and princely India, and not at all reflections on the quality of the men involved—princely Indian nationalism had established its unique presence within the overall Indian nationalist movement by the end of the 1930s. The Rajkot satyagraha, despite its failure, had given a significant boost to nationalist activity in Kathiawar. If only briefly, Kathiawar nationalists had felt themselves to be the focus of sub-continental attention and caught a sense of participation in a wider cause. The satyagraha was a profound political socialization experience for the generation of nationalist leaders who ruled Kathiawar, later called Saurashtra, after independence. Without the experience and its psychological after-effects for both the nationalists and the princes, the removal of the latter from power during 1947–8 might have been infinitely more difficult. Instead, the Rajkot satyagraha developed a bond of understanding and a coordination of goals among Saurashtrian politicians which helped to integrate their formerly fragmented polities and stimulated a peninsula-wide approach to economic and social development.

## NOTES

1. The most complete narrative account is in Gujarati, Ramnarayan N. Pathak, *Rajkot-Satyagraha*, Ahmedabad, 1939. Two accounts in English can be found in chapters of biographies. See D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Bombay, 1952, V, pp. 41-101, 123-41; and Narhari D. Parikh, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, Ahmedabad, 1956, II, pp. 308-66. See also Government of India, *Gujarat State Gazetteers: Rajkot District*, Ahmedabad, 1965, pp. 63-75.
2. *The Ruling Princes, Chiefs, and Leading Personages in the Western India States Agency*, New Delhi, 1935, 2nd ed., pp. 61-8; *The Kathiawar Directory*, comp. Dhanjishah H. Kadaka, Rajkot, 1886, pp. 44-63; Government of India, *Gujarat State Gazetteers: Rajkot District*, pp. 33-4.
3. For a brief but useful account of the earlier period, see A.M. Shah, 'Political System in Eighteenth Century Gujarat', *Enquiry*, I, 1, Spring 1964. For the British arrival, see Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India: 1784-1806*, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 1-35.
4. Alexander Kinloch Forbes, *Ras Mala: Hindu Annals of Western India*, New Delhi, 1973, reprint, pp. 393-400.
5. Bombay Government Records, *Colonel Alexander Walker's Reports on the Province of Kattywar and the Ceded Districts in Guzerat*, Bombay, 1856, I, pp. 65-6.
6. 51,728 to be exact. See C.N. Vakil, *et al*, *Economic Survey of Saurashtra*, Rajkot, 1953, p. 77.
7. The Western India States Agency came into existence in 1924, as a result of the merger of the Kathiawar, Kutch, and Palampur Agencies. The British had arrived at separate settlements with Kutch in 1809 and the Palampur states in 1811. The states of the Kathiawar peninsula accounted for 58% of the area and 72% of the population of the Agency.
8. C.U. Aitchison, comp. *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, Calcutta, 1932, I, pp. 251-3.
9. 'Durbar' specifically referred to the ruler's audience in court, but more generally to the entire administration of the state. In the smaller states and estates, 'Durbar' was a title often given to the local chief or landholder.
10. For an angry catalogue of princely wrongdoings which pays special attention to Kathiawar, see P.L. Chudgar, *Indian Princes Under British Protection: A Study of their Personal Rule, their Constitutional Position, and their Future*, London, 1929.
11. For a description of some of these techniques, see Howard Spodek, 'On the Origins of Gandhi's Political Methodology: The Heritage of Kathiawar and Gujarat,' *Journal of Asian Studies*, III, 2, February 1971. Spodek cites but one example of conflict from one state (Junagadh) in 1882. Prior to the establishment of British hegemony, there does appear to have been conflict, but primarily on an inter-state basis, and from 1863 onwards this was increasingly muted, in courtroom 'battles'. Intra-state conflict, meanwhile, appears to have been rare after 1863 until the first nationalist stirrings in the 1920s. My own interview data gathered among both members and opponents of the princely regimes highlights the paternalist-consensual tradition in Kathiawar, continuing in most states until the late 1930s.

12. Government of India, *Census of India, 1931*, vol. X, *The Western India States Agency*, by H.T. Sorley and A.H. Dracup, Bombay, 1933, I, pp. 98-9.
13. A somewhat adulatory biography in Gujarati can be found in Jayantilal L. Jobanputra and Tribhuvan G. Vyas, *Sir Lakhajiraj Na Sansmaran* ('Reminiscences of Sir Lakhajiraj'), Rajkot, self-published, 1934. For much of the material in this and the following sections, I am indebted to the India Office Library for access to the Political and Secret Records of the Political Department entitled 'Rajkot Affairs, Succession'. All references to these records are given by the I.O.L. file number.
14. L/P + S/13/1498, Collection 30, File 71-2.
15. Rajkot State, *Sansthan Rajkotni Direktri*, comp. Tribhuvan Purshottam Bhatt, Rajkot, 1930, II, p. 607.
16. *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Bombay Presidency*, Calcutta, 1909, II, pp. 385-6. For the decennial growth rate, see *Census of India, 1931*, vol. X, *W.I.S.A.*, II, pp. 6-7.
17. *Ibid.*, I, p. 19.
18. *Ibid.*, I, p. 106.
19. C.N. Vakil, *et al*, *Economic Survey*, pp. 224, 232.
20. C.M. Shroff, Diwan of Rajkot State, note appended to E.H. Kealy, Resident, *W.I.S.A.* to Political Secretary, Government of India, 10 February 1930. L/P + S/13/1498, Collection 30, File 71-2.
21. Kealy, Resident, *W.I.S.A.*, to Watson, Political Secretary, Government of India, *ibid.*, File 71, 5 February 1930.
22. Resume of Events in Indian States, Fortnight ending 15 July 1933. *Ibid.*
23. For an excellent account of the development of Congress policy, see Urmila Phadnis, 'Gandhi and Indian States—A Probe in Strategy', *Gandhi Theory and Practice: Social Impact and Contemporary Relevance*, Simla, Transactions of the I.I.A.S., XI, 1969, pp. 360-74. See also her *Towards the Integration of Indian States 1919-1947*, Bombay, 1968, and R.L. Handa, *History of Freedom Struggle in Princely States*, New Delhi, 1968.
24. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom*, Boston, 1961, p. 324.
25. M. K. Gandhi, *The Indian States' Problem*, Ahmedabad, 1941, *passim*.
26. These included the Kaira satyagraha (1917-18), the Ahmedabad textile labourers' satyagraha (1918), the anti-Rowlatt Act agitation (1919), the Bor-sad satyagraha (1923), the Bardoli satyagraha (1928), and the Dandi salt march (1930).
27. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, or *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Ahmedabad, 1959, pp. 63-5.
28. The first 'political' agitation was an organized protest in 1922 against duck-hunting in Rajkot state by the governor of Bombay. R.K. Dharaiya, 'Gist of the Report on Freedom Movements in Saurashtra (1920-1947)', Ahmedabad, 1972, mimeo, pp. 8-17.
29. Lakhajiraj also encouraged the meetings of the All-India Youth Conference in Rajkot in 1921 and 1928. Significantly, these meetings were also presided over by British Indians, Acharya Kripalani and Jawaharlal Nehru respectively.
30. In a list of Kathiawar nationalists prepared in 1974 for a government pension scheme aiding movement veterans, 70 out of 90 (78%) were Brahmmins, Vanias, Lohanas or Jains. The criterion for inclusion was extensive jail-going, as



verified by local police records. I am grateful to Shri Jethalal Joshi for providing me with a copy of the list.

31. Interview with Rasiklal Parikh, 7 December 1968.
32. R.K. Dharaiya, 'Report on Freedom Movements', pp. 8-17.
33. Interview with Dhebar, 16 September 1968. In his article 'Urban Politics in the Local Kingdoms of India: A View from the Princely Capitals of Saurashtra Under British Rule', *Modern Asian Studies*, VII, 2, 1973, Howard Spodeck detects 'incipient class conflict' in urban Kathiawar between merchants/professionals and princes, stimulated by contradictory economic interests and opportunities created by the British. Undoubtedly some of this tension was projected into some agitations, but in its philosophy and approach the Kathiawar movement was not class conscious, nor was there any suggestion of eliminating the states (see Dharaiya, 'Report on Freedom Movements', p. 7). Eventually, less than a dozen of the 220-odd W.I.S.A. states witnessed any agitation before 1947, most of it weak and prompted externally.
34. Sir Reginald Coupland, *The Indian Problem 1833-1935*, Oxford, 1968, pp. 113-48. See also Sir Maurice Gwyer and A. Appadorai, comps., *Speeches and Documents On The Indian Constitution 1921-47*, Bombay, 1957, I, pp. 205-309.
35. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942*, Bombay, 1964, pp. 323-38; Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, V, pp. 33-40, 102-7.
36. John Glendevon, *The Viceroy at Bay: Lord Linlithgow in India 1936-1943*, London, 1971, pp. 42-112.
37. The original draft of the Haripura Resolution had been prepared at an all-India States Peoples Conference convention at Navsari prior to the Haripura session. See Handa, *Freedom Struggle*, pp. 190-2, and Gandhi, *The Indian States' Problem*, pp. 401-3.
38. *Census of India, 1931*, vol. X, W.I.S.A., I, pp. 14-15. In 1931, the urban population of the Western India States Agency comprised 22.1% of the whole population. The corresponding figure for Bombay Presidency, the most urbanized part of British India, was 20.9%, and of Baroda state 21.4%. Meanwhile, Rajkot state was 63% urban.
39. Rajkot's population was 30.1% immigrant, 27% coming from other parts of the Agency. Rajkot civil station's immigrant population was a high 42.2%. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 28-9, 34-5. The percentage of workers in industry was 7.4%, as compared to the Western India States Agency average of 5.2%. *Ibid.*, I, p. 90.
40. See Chandran D. S. Devanesan, *The Making of the Mahatma*, Madras, 1969, pp. 118-26.
41. Joshi's career pattern was typical of many Kathiawari nationalist leaders. A Brahmin, he gave up university studies in 1921 and based himself in Ahmedabad to do nationalist propaganda and constructive work. He later took part in the salt satyagraha at Ranpur and Viramgam. On his return from British India in 1925 he founded the Rajkot Seva Sangh, which became the focal point for reform and humanitarian work in Rajkot. Interviews with Joshi. 11-13 September 1968.
42. According to U.N. Dhebar, the idea of convening the Parishad was first broached by Sardar Patel. Dhebar himself was not keen on initiating the struggle. But, in his words, 'events moved so fast that there was no alternative'. Interview with Dhebar, 16 September 1968.

43. Resume of Events in Indian States for Fortnights ending 31 August 1938 and 15 September 1938. L/P + S/13/1498, Collection 30, File 71-2. The Political Service noted that 'It is not certain . . . that [Patel] will come, as he is believed to have a poor opinion of the Rajkot agitators.'
44. It was widely assumed in Rajkot that Cadell had been 'planted' as a tool of the raj. But if handwritten marginalia in Political Service memoranda are to be believed, the I.P.S. authorities were unhappy about his coming. Memo, 15 September 1938. L/P + S/13/1498, Collection 30, File 71-2.
45. Interview with Rasiklal Parikh, 7 December 1968.
46. Again, the predominance of Brahmins and merchants was evident in the caste of the half-dozen top leaders in the chain of command: U.N. Dhebar (Brahmin), Rasiklal Parikh (Vania), Gokaldas Gaglani (Vania), Jamnadas Shah (Vania), Ghanshyam Oza (Brahmin), and Jagubhai Parikh (Vania).
47. Interview with Jagubhai Parikh, 29 July 1968.
48. For the state's concessions, see Rajkot State Notification Number 25 of 1937-8 (29 September 1938), Number 4 of 1938-9 (8 November 1938), and Number 35 of 1938-9 (7 December 1938). L/P + S/13/1499, Collection 30, File 71-4.
49. Cypher telegram from viceroy to secretary of state, 26 November 1938. L/P + S/13/1499, Collection 30, File 71-4.
50. Rajkot state's Notification Number 50 of 1938-9, (26 December, 1938). L/P + S/13/1499, Collection 30, File 71-4.
51. Ibid., appendix.
52. Gibson, Resident, W.I.S.A., to Glancy, Political Secretary, New Delhi, 27 December 1939, and Secret/Political Minute by Glancy, 29 December 1938. L/P + S/13/1498, Collection 30, File 71-2.
53. Ibid. Telegrams, viceroy to secretary of state, 5, 9 and 17 January 1939.
54. Parikh, *Patel*, II, p. 333.
55. Decypher of telegram, viceroy to secretary of state, 28 January 1939.
56. *Hindustan Times*, 2 February 1939.
57. The Mahatma's motivation, it must be said, was not entirely clear to his associates. The governor of Bombay reported that K.M. Munshi told him that 'none of them, including Vallabhbhai, is quite sure why [Gandhi] has gone to Rajkot. It was . . . a sudden decision which he has explained to no one.' L/P + S/13/1498, Collection 30, File 71-2.
58. Parikh, *Patel*, II, p. 343.
59. Gandhi to Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, 2 March 1939, L/P + S/13/1499, Collection 30, File 71-4.
60. Parikh, *Patel*, II, p. 348.
61. Relay of telegrams, governor of Bombay to viceroy, 5 and 6 March 1939. L/P + S/13/1498, File Collection 30, 71-2.
62. *The Times*, 7 March 1939.
63. File copy of Chief Justice's Award. L/P + S/13/1499, Collection 30, File 71-4.
64. Thakore Saheb to Gandhi, 10 April 1939, *ibid.*
65. *Hindustan Times*, 9 April 1939, and *The National Call*, 20 April 1939.
66. 'Confession and Repentance', *Harijan*, 20 May 1939.
67. The Rajkot struggle passed quickly into oblivion with the onset of the war and the Quit India Movement, but not without an appropriately bizarre denouement. Dharmendrasinhji had no issue, and gossip suggested that Virawala

wanted his wife to simulate pregnancy and birth, and then substitute another baby as heir. Dharmendrasinhji died mysteriously while hunting in the Gir forest in 1940. Rumour had it that he had been partially devoured by a lion. Virawala died of venereal disease shortly afterwards. Rajkot's two subsequent Thakores, Pradhyumansinhji, and Manoharsinhji, have proved to be highly popular among the people of Rajkot.

68. Virawala is reported by several witnesses to have said during Gandhi's fast that Rajkot would profit if the Mahatma died because the city would then turn into an important pilgrimage centre!
69. This point has been made by Joan Bondurant in her *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965, p. 11.
70. C.N. Vakil, *et al*, *Economic Survey*, p. 88.

# 8

## The Other Guardians: Ideology and Performance in the Indian Political Service

IAN COPLAND

### I

Few areas of Indian social, political and economic life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were not touched to some extent by the administrative ideas and activities of the British raj. Whether the raj's policies had the effects their authors intended is beside the point. What matters is that the raj was *there*. Sooner or later, any man wishing to make his mark in the world had to come to terms with it. This being so, it follows that historians should be looking not at the rulers and the ruled in isolation, but rather as inter-dependent segments of a single, interlocking system. Anil Seal in a recent article has shown how this approach might be used to illuminate our understanding of India's progress towards independence.<sup>1</sup> That article alludes only briefly to the problem of the Indian states, but it is in this area, perhaps, that the role of government in the colonial nexus is most conspicuous. The essays that appear in this book make it abundantly clear that one cannot talk about social and political developments in the states without at least a passing reference to the system of indirect rule which linked them to the government of British India—the 'paramount power' in contemporary jargon.

The Indian princes, unlike the ordinary citizen in British India, did not have to contend with the inhibiting effects of imperial legislation and the 'rule of law'; but they did have to answer to the raj in general terms for the standard of their administrations and for the behaviour of their subjects. The men of the Indian Political Service, posted to the 'native' courts as Residents and Political Agents, were supposed to keep their superiors at headquarters informed about what was happening in the states. When corrective measures were called for it was the job of the Political Service to see



that they were carried out. Generally, the wishes of the paramount power were conveyed to the rulers informally in the shape of 'advice', but no one who knew the way the system operated was fooled by this euphemism. The Political Agent might be deceived, or cajoled, but he was rarely disobeyed.

To understand how the political system of princely India worked we first need to know something about the body of men who constituted the Political Service. Where did they come from? What ideas and aspirations motivated them? What constraints, if any, were put upon their freedom of action by the peculiar conditions under which they laboured? How did they compare, man for man, with their colleagues in the other services?<sup>2</sup> The published autobiographies, the general histories, and even the one specialist study so far undertaken,<sup>3</sup> concur in attributing to the Political Service the same lofty standards of efficiency and moral purpose that are popularly associated with the Indian Civil Service, its parent cadre. Yet was this in fact so? How good were the officers of the Political Service? How were they rated—though rarely in public, of course—by their contemporaries? And how did their efficiency, their ideas and their policies affect the denouement of princely rule?

## II

It would probably be fair to say that no other branch of government during the life of the Indian empire was more consistently maligned than the Political. The widely-reported comments of the Prince of Wales concerning the 'rudeness' of the Bombay government's political officers during his Indian tour of 1875 were taken up the following year by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton. Lytton doubted whether his own officers were any more praiseworthy: 'I am at present far from satisfied [with the performance of the Foreign Department] . . . . Many circumstances in the recent history of . . . relations [with the States] induce me to fear that the average calibre of our Political Officers has deteriorated, and is deteriorating.'<sup>4</sup> Viscount Cross, Secretary of State for India from 1886-92, shared the Viceroy's concern:

The terms of the Queen's Proclamation are almost inconsistent with the interference which we are obliged to practice in the internal administration of the Native States, and we want the best men to carry out this most difficult work . . . . We have not got them.<sup>5</sup>

It was the same story in the twentieth century. Sir Samuel Hoare confessed to the feeling that 'the personnel of our residents and agents in the Indian States is not as good as it was'.<sup>6</sup> Another observer more than confirmed these apprehensions:

Writing without prejudice but in all seriousness, I have never been so disappointed in anything as in the quality, the calibre, and the prestige of the Political Officers whom I have so far met. Something is radically wrong, so wrong that it is almost incomprehensible to me that such a state of affairs as exists could have been allowed to continue.... The method of selection must be wrong, certainly the method of promotion must be, and there appears to be no confidence whatever on the part of Delhi in its Political Officers—a justifiable position perhaps in the circumstances—or on the part of the Political Officers in Delhi.<sup>7</sup>

The Political Service by the 1930s appeared to be in a very bad way indeed. Why?

There are a number of possible explanations. One is that the men themselves were intellectually second-rate.<sup>8</sup> Yet this in itself does not tell us very much. Intellectual calibre was never regarded as an exclusive test of a man's ability to succeed in India. Particularly in the political field, recruits were expected to possess not only brains, but drive, resourcefulness, tact, discretion and integrity<sup>9</sup>—qualities which 'mere' book learning could not impart. Merely to categorize the performance of the cadre by reference to its intellectual attainments is not enough. It is essential that we grasp how the service functioned, what its strengths and weaknesses were, and whether it was properly equipped to handle the large demands that were put upon it.

Bearing this in mind, I have sought to evaluate the performance of the Indian Political Service from a number of differing perspectives: the nature of political work; selection criteria; recruit motivation; ideology; and morale. The points that emerge are 1) that the Political Service was recruited with the fallacious idea that it was a diplomatic service, whereas its work was actually much more diverse; 2) that many politicals joined for the wrong reasons, or with inflated expectations of the service as a career; 3) that the overwhelmingly conservative bent of the service prevented it from meeting the challenge of political change in the 1930s and 1940s; 4) that many military members of the Political cadre were thoroughly demoralized by the Department's anomalous promotional structure; and 5) that the efficiency of the service generally suffered

from technological and policy changes which undermined the authority and independence of the political agencies and prevented them from making a positive contribution even to the implementation (let alone the formulation) of 'feudatory' policy.<sup>10</sup>

### III

#### *Life and Duties*

What was it like to be a Political Agent?

If legend is to be believed, political work in the states consisted mostly of an incessant round of *shikar* expeditions and petty ceremonials. The typical political officer, Philip Mason tells us, was one who, exiled in the 'steamy idleness of a small State', had little else to do but wait for the raja to commit enough indiscretions to justify his removal.<sup>11</sup> Like all stereotypes, Mason's pen-picture contains a germ of truth. Isolation—and its corollary, boredom—was one of the hazards that faced the political officer.<sup>12</sup> Most of the agencies were located in regions well-removed from the ports and the big cities, and European companionship was likely to be scarce.

It is also true that there was little drama in the average Political Agent's existence. Incidents such as the celebrated poisoning attempt on the life of Colonel Phayre in Baroda in 1874, the uprising in Manipur in 1891, and the killing of Major Bazalgette in Orissa in 1939 were few and far between. Political work was normally as much a matter of steady routine as district work. And it was just as demanding.

Political Agents were busy people. In a report on civil salaries compiled for the Government of India in 1859, Commissioner J.D. Ricketts concluded that the Kathiawar Agency was 'the most difficult and responsible office [he had] ... met with in the non-regulation provinces'.<sup>13</sup> Admittedly Kathiawar was somewhat unusual because of the large number of small states attached to it. But the same general point could have been made about any one of the large agencies in Bombay, Rajputana, or Central India. Let it be remembered, too, that the principal agencies and residencies carried salaries of the order in the late nineteenth century of Rs 3,000 or Rs 4,000 per month<sup>14</sup>—putting them on a par with the command of a division in British India. The parsimonious Government of India did not pay such money to enable Political Agents to sit on their backsides!

It has already been noted that the primary function of the Political

Agent was to offer 'advice' to the ruler or rulers in his charge. In a single-state agency<sup>15</sup> (such as Baroda or Mysore) the Political Agent might attend the palace up to twice daily for talks with durbari officials and, occasionally, with the chief himself. In a multi-state agency (such as Eastern Rajputana, Bundelkhand, or Rewa Kantha) his personal visits were likely to be less frequent: weekly, monthly, or perhaps even yearly in the case of really tiny out-of-the-way principalities.<sup>16</sup> At other times contact was maintained through correspondence, and in the twentieth century increasingly by telephone. One of the Political Agent's more time-consuming occupations was dictating, and answering, letters and telegrams. As in district work there were *sheristadars* and *munsiffs* to help with the clerical side, but content and policy were the responsibility of the Political Agent. If political work was sometimes boring it was the office chores that made it so. No less than their counterparts in the districts, the politicals were caught up in the bureaucratic revolution which was a feature of nineteenth century Indian government.

For all that, Political Agents were discouraged from closeting themselves in their cutcherries. They were the eyes and ears of the raj as regards the states, and as such they were expected to find out for themselves what was happening—not just in the palace or in the state capital but throughout the length and breadth of the *mofussil*. This required extensive touring. Tours were generally undertaken in the cold weather, the Political Agent staying in each state for a period of half a day to a week, depending on its size and importance. In 1939, officers of the Indian Political Service accredited to the states spent an average of forty-nine days on tour. Individual figures varied greatly, ranging from nineteen days in the case of the Resident for Gwalior, Rampur, and Benares, to ninety-seven days in the case of the Agent for the Punjab Hill States. A break-down of the return submitted by the Political Agent in Rewa Kantha shows that he spent four days in each of three states, three days in each of five states, two days in one state, and one day or less in each of eight states.<sup>17</sup>

However, 'influence'—that magical but largely immeasurable quality which all politicals strove for but which only a minority managed to acquire—depended on the Political Agent coming to terms with his social environment. Successful Political Agents were those who, between the ordinary chores of managing an office, found time to make friends among the leading personages of the



state, to cultivate sources of 'inside' information, and to master a wealth of details about the past history, foibles, and private aspirations of the ruling dynasty. An afternoon game of tennis on the palace court, a week's *shikar* in the raja's private jungle—such diversions might be written off by the uninitiated as casual relaxation, but there was usually a solid political purpose behind them.

Influence was not an attribute that could be acquired overnight. Months or even years might be spent building up the right contacts, mastering a new vernacular (if the Political Agent came from a different region) and becoming familiar with the customs and prejudices of the people. Length of tenure, therefore, could have an important bearing on a Political Agent's performance. Too frequent shifting of Political Agents from place to place, useful though it may have been in giving them a wide experience of different situations, usually had a deleterious effect on the influence exerted by the government in the states concerned. Thus the slow progress of reform among the Kutch *bhayyad* (kinsmen of the chief) during the 1870s was attributed mainly to 'the frequent changes of Political Officers in Kutch'.<sup>18</sup> About the same time the Political Committee of the Council of India condemned the rapid turnover of officers at Surat as likely to be 'prejudicial to states under British management.'<sup>19</sup> Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India in the early 1930s, echoed their sentiments.<sup>20</sup>

In view of the admitted connection between political influence and the length of a political officer's tenure, it is surprising to find that the shifting of Political Agents tended to become more frequent as time went by. Sachin, a member of the Surat group of states, had six different officers assigned to it during the twelve-month period 1879–80.<sup>21</sup> There were seven changes in the Khandesh Agency during 1880.<sup>22</sup> These may have been extreme cases but the trend is unmistakable. In 1877 political appointments in Bombay averaged over four years' duration; by 1901 the average had fallen by half to just over two years.<sup>23</sup>

The reason for this apparent paradox was the government's fear—confirmed by costly experience—that *too long* an exposure to the problems and personalities of one state or region might encourage an unhealthy spirit of partisanship among the officers concerned. After all, what was more natural than for a political officer, closely acquainted with a particular state's needs and aspirations, to support that state in disputes with other states of which he had no

intimate knowledge? Major Meek, Political Agent for the Mahi Kantha, was honest enough to recognize the temptation:

In trying to estimate the true position in the States, it should be remembered that Political Officers themselves are prone to support their own Princes. In many appointments in the Political Department officers enjoy the society of the Princes, and comforts and amenities which in their view take away from defects in administration.<sup>24</sup>

One could write a lengthy monograph solely on the subject of inter-departmental rivalries involving partisan political officers.

A Political Agent posted to a large agency comprising many small states had, generally speaking, a much tougher assignment than one appointed to a single-state agency or residency. Not only were there more durbars, and consequently durbaris, to be won over, but there was the sheer physical problem of getting around such a large area, especially in the type of terrain commonly encountered in Central India and Orissa where many of the smaller states were located.<sup>25</sup>

The annual winter tour, which was supposed to put political officers in continuous touch with goings-on in their agency, was too brief to be good for anything but 'showing the flag'. Moreover, by the twentieth century, at any rate, the durbars were sufficiently cognizant of the workings of the political system to make sure that for the duration of his stay, the Political Agent was kept well and truly in the dark about anything which might reflect unfavourably on the ruling regime. The Agent for the Deccan States reported on a visit to Miraj Senior: 'the Resident is not asked to visit [public] institutions, and sees little of the town as he is housed in the guest house some distance away; nor is he ever invited to the Palace.'<sup>26</sup>

Some Political Agents may have been able to surmount these obstacles, but judging from the paucity and naivety of much of the information contained in the periodic summaries which were filed with the Secretariat, they were probably in the minority. The following statement by the Collector and Political Agent for Poona is briefer than most but no less ingenuous. 'Nothing of importance takes place in the [Bhor] State. . . . The Chief's subjects seemed contented when I saw them.'<sup>27</sup> A note of conscious irony pervades another report by the Political Agent, Mahi Kantha, Lieutenant-Colonel O'Donnell, on the state of Idar. Referring to his predecessor's report which had spoken favourably of the Maharaja's administration, O'Donnell concluded:

I know no one in the Department, or out of it for that matter . . . has such a wonderful power of probing into the Oriental mind as that officer [but] . . . he must have been able to sound much deeper than I or any of my subordinates have succeeded in doing, for in place of the appreciation of H[is] H[ighness]' 'generous, manly nature, and strong personality', I have found [only] passive endurance because nothing better was possible.<sup>28</sup>

There was even some doubt as to whether political officers had any right of access to the chiefs under their charge—a crucial point if the 'personal dynamic' was to have any effect. In 1922 the Resident at Hyderabad, Lieutenant-Colonel Knox, was repeatedly refused an interview with the Nizam. He appealed to Simla for assistance.<sup>29</sup> However, after looking closely into the rights of the case the Political Secretary reluctantly concluded there was little that government could do: 'If a prince chooses to bury himself in his palace, the Political Agent cannot dig him out, and however tactful and untiring he may be in his efforts to cultivate friendly relations, his efforts will not always be crowned with success.'<sup>30</sup>

The Political Agent did not stand or fall by his own efforts alone. The average political agency was a fairly substantial undertaking, employing perhaps half a dozen European and Indian assistants and an even larger office staff—clerks, translators, accountants, record-keepers, and the like.<sup>31</sup> Leaving aside the European assistants, whose slim chances of reaching the top of their profession depended on their earning good reports from their superior, the role of the Indian subordinates was clearly a crucial one. Key man in the 'native' establishment was the *daftadar* or *sheristadar*, who doubled as the Political Agent's confidential adviser and foreman over the other Indian staff. Salleh Jaffar, *sheristadar* to the Resident at Aden, was for years the uncrowned ruler of the agency's Arabic department, there being 'no one . . . here capable of checking his translation of English drafts [of letters to the chiefs] into Arabic.'<sup>32</sup> Jaffar was regarded as a loyal and honest servant of government; but the same could probably not be said for all of his office-holding compatriots.

The problem was compounded by a concentration of certain castes in the administrative hierarchy: Chitpavan and Desastha Brahmins in the Deccan, Nagar Brahmins in Kathiawar. Kinship linkages between office-holders in the agencies and landholders or officials inside the states opened the door to widespread graft and intrigue and hampered the efforts of the British authorities to pin

down and prosecute those responsible.<sup>33</sup> Narayan Lullubhai, *daftadar* to the Political Agent in Rewa Kantha in the early 1800s, used his official position to bribe and intimidate the local chiefs who believed, not without reason, that he possessed 'more power than the Political Agent himself'.<sup>34</sup> Boasted Lullubhai: 'As Major Buckle . . . made it a practice to call upon me every second or third day, it was generally believed, especially by my enemies, that Major Buckle could not do without me.'<sup>35</sup>

In Kathiawar corruption was so rife that the *Times of India* was driven to remark that 'the Nagars are the real political agents and our officers but puppets in their hands'.<sup>36</sup> It is probable that by the 1860s the heyday of the overmighty subordinate had already passed, though corruption was not eliminated overnight. By the end of the century the problem was less one of graft than of 'sedition'.

As Brahmins, particularly in western India, became increasingly involved in agitational politics, so the government began to regret its long-standing dependence on their professional skills. As early as 1894 the Political Secretary in Bombay, William Lee-Warner, suggested a reorganization of the Kathiawar establishment to correct 'the preponderance of Brahmins in Political employ'.<sup>37</sup> By 1911 this had mushroomed into a scheme to limit the recruitment of Brahmins to the public service generally.<sup>38</sup> Eliminating Brahmins, however, meant finding similarly qualified men of other castes to take their place; and they were just not available. Thus debrahminization could only be followed through at the risk of lowering the already indifferent standards of education obtaining among the subordinate employees of the agencies; and that, even rabid Brahminophobes were unwilling to stomach.

Just as the states differed greatly in size, population, and style of administration from one another, so there were various kinds of agencies which put differing demands on their incumbents. Comparing Baroda with the Kathiawar States, the *Bombay Administration Report* for 1871-2 conceded that there was 'considerable diversity . . . in the degree of subordination in which the States are placed with reference to the paramount British authority, and in the amount of interference in their internal administration.' At Baroda the Resident's brief was to 'watch and control events' but not to interfere in the local administration of the country; whereas in Kathiawar the Political Agent's 'power of supervision and direction is more frequently called into play'.<sup>39</sup> The larger residencies, such as



Hyderabad, Gwalior, and Baroda came closest to the diplomatic model which is the one most commonly associated with indirect rule. There the Residents, or Agents to the Governor-General (AGG), really did advise, although with the clear expectation that the advice tendered would be accepted. However, agencies such as Kathiawar and Central India, containing congeries of small or mainly backward states, were much more like the 'non-regulation' tracts of British India where the raj employed landed intermediaries to collect its share of the land revenue. During the 1860s-1870s the Gujarat, Central India, and Central Provinces states were graded by the imperial authorities according to their perceived ability to handle the administration of civil and criminal justice. States with reasonably efficient administrative systems were classified as 'full powered' states and allowed to exercise justice over their own subjects without interference from the paramount power. Others with less impressive credentials were given restricted powers—the right to try civil suits up to a certain value, and criminal cases carrying prescribed penalties. The 'residuary' jurisdiction, original and appellate, was assumed by the British and exercised by them on the chiefs' behalf. On this pretext many small states lost their powers of punishment altogether. No less than five-sevenths of the area of the Mahi Kantha Agency in Gujarat (2,500 square miles) consisted of non-jurisdictionary estates grouped into *thana* circles under the direct control of agency officials.<sup>40</sup>

With the growth in law and order and the shift towards cash-based revenue settlements with their emphasis on written rights, litigation in the Indian states in the later nineteenth century rose dramatically. By the end of the 1860s it was common for up to 1,500 cases to be decided in Kathiawar annually.<sup>41</sup> Here, and in other areas where there were many low-powered and non-jurisdictionary states, the administration of justice absorbed a large and increasing amount of the Political Agents' time. R.E. Wingate observed that 'in the States of Western India a Political Agent is really not a Political Agent at all but practically a District Officer.'<sup>42</sup>

The approximation to a district officer could be even closer if a Political Agent was called on to administer a state under British management due to past misgovernment or to the minority of its ruler. Historians of indirect rule have always known of the existence of such 'attachments', but they have invariably regarded them as some sort of anomaly occurring only rarely in the lifetime of a

princely state. The truth is otherwise. Table 1 lists the number of states under direct British administration during the five-year period 1898–1902.

TABLE 1

*Number of States\* under Attachment, 1898–1902  
by Province or Agency*

	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902
Madras	1	1	1	1	1
Bombay	17	18	17	18	17
Bengal	8	7	8	7	8
Punjab	5	6	6	6	6
Central Provinces	6	6	6	6	6
Assam	1	1	1	1	1
Rajputana	7	5	6	6	8
Central India	14	15	15	16	15
Baluchistan	1	1	1	1	1
Total	60	60	61	62	63

Over 200 square miles in area

SOURCE: P.P., S.P. No. 317 of 1906, p. 3.

The figures are astonishing. Out of about 250 states with an area of over 200 square miles, between 60 and 63, or nearly a quarter, were under direct British rule. Nor was the period 1898–1902 in any way exceptional. Between 1860 and 1930 there was an average of about 15 states annually under 'attachment' in the Bombay Presidency alone.<sup>43</sup> In 1876–7, a peak year, some 28 Bombay states with an aggregate area of 24,000 square miles and a population of three and a half millions, were under government management.<sup>44</sup> This was almost half the entire area of the Presidency under 'native' rule. The same pattern was repeated in other areas. In the Central Provinces and Orissa, almost every state experienced at least one period of British management between 1882 and 1932; some were under British rule for more than twenty years. The provincial average was a remarkable sixteen years.<sup>45</sup>

Although the men appointed to administer such states were not always political officers—or at least European ones<sup>46</sup>—the chances of a Political Agent at some stage of his career taking direct charge of a state were still high. Between 1884 and 1911, twenty-four Bombay political officers (sixteen military men and eight civilians) spent a grand total of approximately 474 months on ‘foreign service’ as administrators of states<sup>47</sup>—a task for which the army men, at any rate, had had no special preparation.

#### IV

##### *Recruitment*

Even in the nineteenth century political work was generally as much administrative as diplomatic; and this became more pronounced as time wore on. Yet the Indian Political Service was recruited as if its job was exclusively one of caring for fractious rajas. The fact that until very late in the piece military officers predominated over civilians was itself an apt reflection of the government’s priorities. Military recruitment was justified on many grounds. It was said, for example, that the chiefs ‘looked up to’ men of rank.<sup>48</sup> The real reason, however, was that military men cost less than civilians.<sup>49</sup> High on the list of information required from applicants for the Political Department were queries about the candidate’s popularity, horsemanship and sporting ability.<sup>50</sup> Asked whether Lieutenant Daniell, an applicant for political employ in 1906, was ‘of active habits and proficient in field sports’, Daniell’s commanding officer replied: ‘Yes, active indeed. Exceptionally good at games. Cricket average 35 this season.’<sup>51</sup> Not surprisingly, political officers were often criticized for their intellectual mediocrity.

Except for the civilians who worked for three years in the revenue line before joining the service, political officers received no special administrative or judicial training. Armed only with a bevy of manuals, grammars, and legal texts, they were thrust into the field to learn their trade by experience. By the twentieth century there was a groundswell of dissatisfaction with existing procedures of recruitment and training, but reform—whether due to official complacency or to a lack of alternative avenues of recruitment—was slow in coming. During his term as Foreign Secretary, Harcourt Butler tried to dissolve the Department’s prejudice against ‘book-learning’ and intellectual prowess in general by emphasizing the

importance of clear, comprehensive reporting as part of a political officer's duties. But his efforts were unavailing: 'It is in the routine of business that the Political Department is weakest,' he regretfully confided to his successor.<sup>52</sup> Later, F.V. Wylie and others urged a complete reconstitution of the political cadre on the grounds that most of its members were incapable of dealing with the kinds of economic and constitutional problems which the states in the 1930s and 1940s were beginning to experience.<sup>53</sup> The point was subsequently taken up by the Viceroy, Linlithgow, in correspondence with the Secretary of State.<sup>54</sup> But the war intervened before the Viceroy's initiatives could be brought to fruition.

Given the government's prejudice against using civilians in political posts and their preference for athletic attainments over learning skills, it is no surprise that the Indian Political Service became a byword for intellectual mediocrity. The problem, however, went deeper. Even by its own standards the Political Service failed to attract enough men from the I.C.S., and more importantly, from the Staff Corps of the Indian Army. One well-informed observer stated that, contrary to expectations, there was a 'considerable want of properly qualified [Staff Corps] officers to take up Indian appointments'.<sup>55</sup> Bombay, so often the Cinderella province where political work was concerned, suffered most from this shortage. In 1890 there was not a single applicant for political employ in the Presidency.<sup>56</sup> The same situation arose in 1908.<sup>57</sup> In 1902 the Political Secretary was forced to appoint the Assistant Collector of Belgaum to a vacant residentsip in the Southern Maratha Country, there being no political officer available. 'The Political Department', he confessed, 'has simply come to the end of its tether.'<sup>58</sup>

Some army men, it is true, were discouraged and sometimes even prevented from applying by their superiors, who naturally resented having their best tyros 'filched' to service the needs of a department regarded by many as a superfluous sideline. In 1877 Sir Richard Temple, Governor of Bombay, personally intervened with the Commander-in-Chief to obtain the services of a particular officer. His request was twice denied 'upon a ground which it is difficult for me to gainsay, that we are much below our complement of officers for the Bombay Native Army'.<sup>59</sup> The situation fifty years later was no better. Writing in November 1929, the Resident at Jaipur observed with alarm that the traditional sources of political recruitment had 'of recent years, owing to internal changes, largely dried up'.<sup>60</sup>



Prior to World War I the Political Department, and especially the Bombay branch of it, was notorious for its poor salaries. In 1907 the eight most senior army officers in the Punjab Commission cleared between Rs 2,150 and Rs 2,700 monthly, compared to the Rs 1,800 earned in the Bombay Political Department by officers of equal rank and seniority. Even regimental officers were sometimes better off. In the later nineteenth century, a major in the Staff Corps holding a regimental charge was entitled to a basic pay of Rs 1,140 a month. Men of the same standing in Bombay were lucky if they received Rs 1,200.<sup>61</sup> To one Political Secretary, the moral was obvious:

The Bombay P[olitical] D[eartment] is certain to be a failure if military officers in it have the chance of getting less pay than they would with their regiments. *The least* they can expect is the same pay, or if we are to attract good men we must offer better.<sup>62</sup>

The financial position was exacerbated by the fact that salaries were attached to particular posts; a satisfactory time-scale system was not introduced until the second decade of the twentieth century. As early as 1873 the Governor of Bombay noted that the 'prizes of the Political Department are so few that the majority of Political officers can expect to rise to no higher pay than Rs 1,200'.<sup>63</sup> It was much the same story a quarter of a century later. 'Many junior officers', wrote another Political Secretary, 'having obtained rapid promotion, stagnate for years without any material advance.'<sup>64</sup> If anything, he understated the position. In 1901 no less than six Bombay politicals of over twenty-five years' service were drawing the pay of Assistant Political Agents.<sup>65</sup>

If lack of incentives deterred the best men from joining the Political Service, others joined out of pure expediency. Some were driven to political work because it offered them an outlet from the 'drudgery of regimental routine'.<sup>66</sup> For others, financial reasons were paramount. Recruits to the Political Department holding the army rank of lieutenant received an immediate increase in salary,<sup>67</sup> making it possible for them to marry.<sup>68</sup> Finally, there was the dubious and mostly illusory attraction of the 'diplomatic life'; an eternal round (or so it was assumed by the uninitiated) of palace festivities, *shikar* expeditions, and ostentatious ritual. One officer,

for example, reckoned that by transferring to the Political Department he had attained 'a position of greater dignity.'<sup>69</sup> Most military wives would probably have agreed with him, if Mrs Grimwood's romantic speculations about the Manipur Residency were widely held.<sup>70</sup>

Despite the admitted failure of the traditional avenues of recruitment to provide an adequate supply of good men to the Political Service, the government refused to consider the obvious alternative—recruitment from among the 'natives' of India. As late as 1938 only seven Indians had been admitted to the ranks of the I.P.S., all since 1919.<sup>71</sup> Of this select band, only two eventually went on to take charge of a political agency.<sup>72</sup>

Government doggedly defended its discrimination against the employment of Indians on the grounds that the princes preferred dealing with Europeans, and that Indians lacked the energy and resolve which political work demanded. As the Resident at Aden brusquely observed in reply to the Bombay government's tentative suggestion that an Indian deputy assistant might be temporarily entrusted with the duties of Political Agent at Perim: 'A native in such a position would rapidly become a cipher.'<sup>73</sup> The government's refusal to admit Indians in any numbers represented not only an act of foolish discrimination, but also a monumental waste of talent.

In sum, it would appear that the Government of India got the Political Service it deserved. Prejudice against intellectual ability, emphasis on physical prowess, financial parsimony, and a lack of basic training in administrative skills, combined to produce a service dominated by upright but slow-thinking and extremely unimaginative officers. This might not have mattered so much if the states themselves had remained backward and unsophisticated. But by the twentieth century many of the durbar were capable of contending with the government's men on their own terms. With the advent of chiefs' conferences, and still later the Chamber of Princes, the durbar had a further opportunity to go on the offensive against the raj, and a number—led by the middle-sized states such as Patiala, Bikaner, and Bhopal—did so. Their efforts culminated in the Standing Committee's briefing in 1927 of the eminent barrister, Sir Leslie Scott, to put the princes' case against the 'doctrine of paramountcy' This new brand of counter-diplomacy put the dexterity of the Political Service to the test. More and more it was found wanting.

## V

*Ideology and Changing Conditions*

Considerations of individual ability do not alone explain why the Political Service failed to keep pace with the changing circumstances of political life in the states. For a satisfactory answer we need to take into account both the ideology of the cadre and its morale.

The outlook of the Political Service was generally very conservative, if anything even more so than the I.C.S. which itself was scarcely a byword for liberalism. The politicals, like the Indian Civil Servants, came from predominantly upper middle-class backgrounds, were educated mainly at public schools and came to India via Oxford or Cambridge, or in the case of the army men, Sandhurst. Moreover, just as it might be argued that Indian service generally offered a spiritual refuge to people alienated by the pace of political change in their own country,<sup>74</sup> so, particularly in the twentieth century, service in the states held out a special allure to those disturbed by the growing spectacle of a 'pleaders' raj'. Indeed, as the seeds of constitutional advance took root in British India official opinion began to take a hard look at what the states had to offer. Many, sceptical about the applicability of British ideas of democracy to Indian conditions, saw in the government of the rajas a system more in consonance with the traditions and prejudices of the country. Elsewhere in this volume, James Manor talks about the 'autocratic side of Britain's split personality' in India in the twentieth century (p. 308). There were political calculations involved in this of course, as Manor points out. But there was also a widespread admiration for the values of the patrimonial system. Harcourt Butler, Political Secretary under Lord Minto, expressed it better than anyone. In his 'handing-over' note of 15 November 1910 Butler opined that

... we have much to learn from Native States. The indigenous system of government is a loose despotic system tempered by corruption, which does not press hard on the daily lives of the people . . . . Our system is a scientific system which presses steadily on the people in their lives . . . and through its hordes of subordinates makes itself everywhere felt. The advancing Native States generally adopt our methods because it is easier to get good men trained in our school . . . . But he would be a brave man who said that our system was always the better, and my own belief is that we shall see some reaction of ideas.<sup>75</sup>

In that, Butler was mistaken. Nevertheless his grand vision of the states as a counterweight to 'democracy' in the provinces dominated the thinking of the Political Department until well into the 1930s. Sir William Barton, the eminent Resident at Hyderabad, wrote in 1927 that the 'existence of a series of well-governed states . . . has unquestionable advantages from the standpoint of Indian politics generally. It would be a steadying element in times of political flux . . . . It would be a bulwark of British prestige and influence, the preservation of which will not be an easy matter even in an only partially self-governing India.'<sup>76</sup> A colleague in Central India, Lieutenant-Colonel David Field, was of like mind. 'If the Rulers of the states wish to stand aloof from the democratic experiment in British India, I say, let them . . . I need hardly point out that in British India we have received small thanks for our efforts in the cause of democracy.'<sup>77</sup>

The Home Government's support for a scheme of all-India federation in 1930 brought the Department's conservative bias into clear focus. Whitehall welcomed the participation of the princes because they believed, like Sir Terence Keyes, Barton's successor at Hyderabad, that they would be able to dominate the proceedings of the all-India legislature.<sup>78</sup> However, the Government of India, and the Political Department in particular, were sceptical. B.J. Glancy, then Deputy Secretary, heralded the doubts of his colleagues when he observed in 1927 that 'in any form of Parliament common to democratic India and themselves . . . the votes of the Princes would be of little avail'.<sup>79</sup> By 1932 the Department's hostility to federation had hardened into open revolt. Senior governmental spokesmen from the Viceroy downwards issued private warnings to the chiefs against coming into the scheme, while in public reassuring Whitehall of their efforts to promote it. Following a meeting with Willingdon in March 1932, the M.P., John Davidson, noted bitterly: 'The fact is, of course, that the Political Department . . . have been heartily opposed to Federation and . . . have had a very hostile influence amongst the Princes.'<sup>80</sup> Whether this influence proved decisive it is difficult to say. Sources within the Department have been adamant that the blame lay elsewhere,<sup>81</sup> and it would be foolish to ignore, amongst other things, the backstairs encouragement which the princes received from elements in the British Conservative Party intent on sabotaging the larger scheme of constitutional advance. What is clear, however, is that the Political Service



(Keyes, and a few others excepted) did not, until very late, push the idea of federation very actively in conversation with their charges. Had they done so, the denouement of 1939 might well have been avoided,<sup>82</sup> though whether this would have made any difference to the final outcome, beyond postponing it a few years, is open to doubt. Manor, in this book, suggests that the fate of the Indian states was already sealed by the 1930s. If so, the Indian Political Service must bear a large measure of responsibility, for it was the Political Department's permissive policy of *laissez-faire* towards the states after 1909 which enabled the princes to shut their eyes to what was happening in British India.

If one had to nominate a single, overriding cause for the indifferent performance of the political cadre, it would seem to be in the realm of morale. All the evidence that we have examined suggests morale amongst the rank and file of the Indian Political Service was low. In the nineteenth century the main reason was probably career frustration. Young military officers entered the Department with high hopes of rising to the top of their profession with all the social prestige and economic rewards that this entailed; more often than not they were disappointed.

Already a source of discontent by the 1880s, the financial prospects of the Political Service declined still further during the last decades of the century as a consequence of inflation. The cost of living in India, particularly for Europeans, increased sharply from the 1880s. Despite meagre increases in civil salaries, the real wages of Indian public servants were lower in 1900 than they had been at any time since the Mutiny. Civilians of all colours were hard-hit by the fall in value of the rupee.<sup>83</sup> The Governor of Bombay, Lord Harris, was thinking mainly of the I.C.S. when he confided to the Secretary of State that 'we have men who are positively starving themselves in their efforts to [earn] . . . enough to support their families and educate their children';<sup>84</sup> but his remarks were equally applicable to the Political Service.

Embittered by long-standing grievances over pay and promotion, the rank and file of the Political Service retained little faith in the good intentions of the Secretariat. In a sense this was unfair, for to the extent that the service laboured under real inequalities, the fault lay not with the Political Department as such, but with the Finance Department which controlled the purse-strings, and with the politicians at Whitehall who made the rules. But by the same token the

Secretariat-wallahs showed little acumen in their handling of the problem, and indeed revealed by their actions that they failed to appreciate the depth of feeling which existed in the service, especially among the junior officers.

The belated establishment of a time-scale system of remuneration for the Indian Political Service in 1911, and for the Bombay Political Service in 1913, did much to restore the flagging morale of the military cadre.<sup>85</sup> In future they could look forward to an assured rise in the ranks of the Department, with remuneration to match, up to the twentieth year of service. Only the very top jobs—the so-called ‘selection posts’—were henceforward to be filled by patronage.

Nevertheless, certain grievances remained. The new time-scale still left the military cadre in an inferior position to the civilian members of the service. Nor did the military men stand much chance of reaching the top of their profession. Increasingly, the biggest residencies and top secretariat jobs went to civilians, who were evidently reckoned to be better-equipped to handle the heavy responsibilities which such offices involved.

The majority of twentieth century Secretariat officials came up from the ranks. In the nineteenth century, however, neither Bombay nor Calcutta saw any incongruity in shunting men into the Political Secretaryship without benefit of a practical apprenticeship in the states. Charles Gonne,<sup>86</sup> Political Secretary in Bombay for the record term of twenty years (1864–84), never set foot in a ‘native’ state in an official capacity during his entire Indian career. His celebrated successor, William Lee-Warner,<sup>87</sup> author of *The Indian Protectorate* (1894) and sometime member of the Council of India, served only eighteen months in Kolhapur prior to taking over as Political Secretary. Part of the reason for this anomaly lay in the fact that under the local government the same secretary presided over three departments—the ‘Political, Judicial and Secret’—which meant that the Political Secretary had to be someone with a background in judicial work, ordinarily a serving civilian.

The same argument did not apply to the Foreign Office of the Government of India which was essentially self-contained. But there again, not all the secretaries were political specialists. Harcourt Butler came to the Foreign Department in 1909 directly from Oudh. B.J. Glancy, who held the reins of the Department during the 1930s, was from Punjab. His successor as Political Adviser to

the Crown Representative—a post created in the wake of the 1935 reforms<sup>88</sup>—F.V. Wylie, had previously been governor of the Central Provinces. Conversely, the Political Secretariat was frequently a springboard to high office in other spheres of government. Wylie's move to the Central Provinces followed a term as under-secretary. Glancy, too, got a provincial governorship, in his case the Punjab, despite Linlithgow's doubts about his continuing judgement and stamina.<sup>89</sup>

Political Secretaries were chosen by patronage. The choice was made by the Viceroy (or in the case of Bombay, by the Governor), though usually with the prior knowledge and acquiescence of members of Council and the Home Government. In the nineteenth century personal influence may well have counted for something in the way patronage was exercised; but by the twentieth century it is safe to say that the political officers who made it to the top did so exclusively on the basis of merit. Arthur Lothian, Courtney Latimer, Kenneth Fitze, Conrad Corfield, Wingate, Glancy, and Wylie—the leading Secretariat figures during the last decades of British paramountcy—would have made their mark anywhere, for they were men of outstanding ability. The selection of Wylie for the Central Provinces and Glancy for the Punjab is testimony enough of that.

The weakness of the Secretariat officials, like that of the cadre at large, was that they were too blinkered in their attitude to groups and forces outside the states; too ready to defend the princes against their 'enemies'. Of those mentioned in the previous paragraph only Fitze and Wylie could be described as 'liberals', while even Fitze was not immune from the universal malady of the pen-pushing specialist—a consuming preoccupation with 'papers'.<sup>90</sup> Even Linlithgow, scarcely a radical, conceded that Lothian and Corfield in particular were 'somewhat conservative'.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, in deciding to put Corfield in the Political Secretaryship in place of Latimer, the Viceroy had a weather-eye on the future. 'I think', he told Zetland, 'that his training and attitude—one like Glancy's of very marked sympathy with the States and their point of view—might well be the right one during a period when it [is] . . . important from our point of view to keep the Princely Order together, and reasonably happy'.<sup>92</sup> But Corfield's promotion, designed to groom him for the Political Advisership which was expected to become vacant in a few years,<sup>93</sup> was a near disaster for the orderly withdrawal of British

paramountcy, as Manor records later in this volume.

The Secretariat was a closed shop to the military cadre. It was much the same for the majority of civilians in the Political Service: they were destined to spend their careers exclusively in subordinate stations. Feelings of hostility and frustration towards the Secretariat were exacerbated by what the subordinate men saw as a gradual and deliberate erosion of their power and authority. The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was a period of dramatic improvement in communications. Prior to 1870 not many of the states were linked to headquarters by the telegraph, and almost none by the railway. As a result, the man on the spot was frequently able, and indeed compelled, to take the initiative in committing government to a particular course of action. By the end of the century those days were gone. During the 1870s, and still more in the 1880s and 1890s, a network of railways and telegraph lines was constructed across the country, some financed by the states themselves. By 1900 the Presidency capitals were in close touch with all but the remotest corners of the *mofussil*. The effect of these changes can be demonstrated statistically. In 1868 the Bombay Political Secretariat received 5,090 papers and dispatched 3,658; by 1885 they were sending nearly as many as they received—7,703 as against 7,769.<sup>94</sup>

Deprived of his freedom to initiate, the political officer tended to become more and more a mere channel of communication between government and the chiefs. Though still an important link in the chain of command, he could no longer maintain a regular influence on the course of imperial policy. The changing order of things was clearly discerned by a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review* in 1897:

[The Political] officer is now more frequently shifted than of old, he initiates less, he reports more; he has become a frequent channel of communication; the subjects with which he has to deal are of a far more complex character than they used to be; they are also very often pettier. The central bureau to which innumerable and frequently trifling references are made incurs the danger of tying them up in red tape, or more probably, of treating all the 688 sovereignties alike according to some preconceived system, policy, or theory.<sup>95</sup>

A senior official in the India Office wrote in 1930: 'In modern conditions it must be rare for the local officers to make even informal suggestions in matters of importance without authority from headquarters for doing so'.<sup>96</sup>



From 1909 until the 1930s the feudatory policy of the Government of India was dominated by two interrelated ideas: 1) that the states had an important destiny to fulfil in Indian politics as allies of the raj;<sup>97</sup> and 2) that in order to win the friendship of the princes it would be necessary to concede to their demands for greater autonomy in the administration of their internal affairs. The '*laissez-faire* policy' as it became known, was the brainchild of two men—Lord Minto and his Political Secretary, Harcourt Butler, the distinguished administrator of Oudh. However, it was left to Butler's successors in the Political Department, notably J.B. Wood and J. Thompson, to give substance to his beliefs in the shape of resolutions designed to ameliorate the more arbitrary and resented features of British paramountcy.

The effect of these measures on the prestige and authority of the political officer was disastrous. According to the *Political Department Manual* bequeathed to the Department by Butler during his term as Secretary, the government would henceforth 'prefer to take no overt measures for enforcing reform' in the states, except where 'misrule reaches a pitch which violates the elementary laws of civilization'.<sup>98</sup> With this extraordinary brief at his elbow what was there for the political officer to do but spend his time 'sitting in his Residency and listening to bazaar, or club gossip'?<sup>99</sup> Even if he did take complaints to the durbar there was no guarantee that his advice would be heeded; for while 'the policy of "*laissez-faire*" rules . . . ill-disposed Darbars can snap their fingers at Political Officers who endeavour to prevent misgovernment'.<sup>100</sup> Kenneth Fitze voiced the deep frustration felt by most of his colleagues when he told the Political Secretary: 'If . . . the policy of non-intervention is to be finally reaffirmed, the process of the degeneration of the Political Officer into a mere Post Office will rapidly continue and the functions of Political Agents might just as well be carried on by their Head Clerks.'<sup>101</sup>

Criticism of the *laissez-faire* policy by the rank and file of the service mounted steadily during the latter part of the 1920s encouraged by Irwin's contempt for princely obscurantism. The Secretariat, however, remained wedded to Butlerian orthodoxy until the mid-1930s. The first murmur of dissent from a highly-placed official in the Department came from R.E.L. Wingate in a secret note of August 1934. The policy of non-intervention, Wingate argued, had not fulfilled expectations. Far from establishing them-

selves as centres of stability in the subcontinent the states had relapsed into obscurity, and in one or two cases, into barbarism. Only a complete reversal of the government's 'negative mentality' in questions concerning the states could avert a complete collapse of princely sovereignty as soon as British India gained its promised autonomy. 'How are we to save the States?' Only by giving advice 'whether or not it is sought and . . . compel [ling] its acceptance'.<sup>102</sup> Wingate's note exploded like a bombshell. Willingdon and Hoare were impressed by its fervour, but to Glancy, the Political Secretary, it was sheer heresy. 'The statements he has made', declared Glancy in a letter to Whitehall, 'are expressed in obviously hyperbolic language: they are not free from inconsistency, and there would be no difficulty in refuting either his premises or his conclusions' Glancy condescendingly added that Wingate had since 'changed his mind' about the need for action. '[It appears that] Wingate has of late been suffering from strain . . .'<sup>103</sup> It was Wingate, not Glancy, however, who enjoyed the last laugh. By the end of the 1930s non-intervention had been totally discredited. Growing agitation by a mixed group of Congressmen and states' politicians left the princes foundering in their own splendid isolation. In the aftermath of the Talcher crisis of 1939, Linlithgow bared his mind to Zetland. 'I cannot help thinking', he mused, 'that we have ourselves to thank . . . for the pitch which matters have reached in certain circumstances. The great mistake, I am now disposed to think, lay in the change of policy after Curzon's retirement, which led us to relax our control over individual princes and over happenings inside their States . . . We, and the States, have now . . . to pay for 30 years of *laissez-faire*.'<sup>104</sup>

Non-intervention emasculated the political officer by taking from him his principal *raison d'être*—that of adviser in matters of internal administration. But the philosophy had other side effects which were equally deleterious to the man on the spot. Under the old dispensation the princes were kept at arms' length, isolated both from government and from each other. The Butler policy by contrast laid great stress on consultation between government and the princes, a practice begun during the war years of 1914–18 and given formal shape in 1921 with the establishment of the Chamber of Princes at Delhi. For the first time leading chiefs could take their problems straight to headquarters instead of having to go through their Political Agent and the local Agent to the Governor-General.

John Davidson was not alone in believing that the Chamber of Princes had 'completely short-circuited' the regular machinery of the Political Department.<sup>105</sup> According to J. Fitzpatrick, the Agent to the Governor-General for the Punjab States, the princes participated in the proceedings of the Chamber because they saw in them the means to eliminate 'not only the local political officer but the Political Department as a whole'.<sup>106</sup> With diplomatic activity centred more and more at headquarters, the need for an elaborate system of locally-based agencies largely disappeared. Many smaller agencies were abolished during the 1920s, affording government a substantial saving in men and materials. In Rajputana, the number of subordinate agencies dropped from seven to four; in Central India, from six to three; in Madras, from three to one.<sup>107</sup> One of the fruits of informal consultation between the princes and the Political Department was an agreement on the codification of political practice. While the Simla authorities consistently rejected the princes' demands for a strictly legal interpretation of paramountcy, a large measure of concurrence was achieved as regards the circumstances in which imperial intervention was appropriate. Agreements such as those of October 1920, and September 1932, which laid down formal procedures for the resolution of disputes between the states and the Crown involving reference to *ad hoc* tribunals of princes,<sup>108</sup> made further inroads into the steadily shrinking jurisdiction of the local political officer.<sup>109</sup> It is a fair indication of the morale of the Department that Davidson could declare to Hoare in 1932 that the senior Residents had no confidence in their superiors, and that Sir Terence Keyes, the Resident at Hyderabad, could talk of 'the rottenness of the Political Department'.<sup>110</sup>

### *The Other Guardians*

The traditional picture of the British raj in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been that of a superlative army of administrators united in the single goal of governing a subcontinent: men with solid loyalties and high ideals; a trifle unsympathetic, perhaps, but nevertheless remarkably efficient by comparison with colonial elites elsewhere. From the viewpoint of the services, then, this period was the apogee of empire.

The Political Service did, as a matter of fact, pride itself on its high standards and on the large demands which it was accustomed to make upon its members. But this self-image, however much it has

become entrenched in the imagination of later generations, bore little resemblance to reality. Impressive enough when viewed from afar, the machinery of British paramountcy becomes much less credible when examined at close quarters. To study the operations of the Political Service in detail is to reveal that the efficiency which it claimed was sometimes a mere facade behind which lurked a good deal of caprice, bad temper, and weakness on the part of individual officers.

These findings are not altogether surprising for the men concerned were struggling with difficult problems, and difficult people. They are suggestive nevertheless. The political cadre differed little from the general intake of the I.C.S. as regards its social and educational background. It is therefore likely that the deficiencies revealed in this study would be corroborated by a closer examination of other branches of the bureaucracy. Behind its glittering facade of pomp and efficiency the raj hid its doubts, its shortcomings, and its weaknesses. As time went by they were to increase.

## NOTES

1. A. Seal, 'Imperialism and Nationalism in India', in J. Gallagher, G. Johnson and A. Seal, eds., *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics 1870 to 1940*, Cambridge, 1973, pp. 1-27.
2. In the past few years scholars such as Cohn, Compton, Dewey, Potter, and Spangenberg have told us something about the background, education, and attitudes of the I.C.S. But other aspects, such as career motivation and performance, have been barely touched on. B.S. Cohn, 'Recruitment and Training of British Civil Servants in India, 1600-1860' in R. Braibanti, ed., *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*, Durham, N.C., 1966, pp. 87-140. J.M. Compton, 'Open Competition and the Indian Civil Service, 1854-1876', *English Historical Review*, LXXXIII, 1968, pp. 265-84. C.J. Dewey, 'Ruling Elite: the Indian Civil Service in the Era of Competitive Examination', *ibid.*, LXXXVIII, 1973, pp. 262-85. D. Potter, 'Manpower Shortage and the End of Colonialism: the Case of the Indian Civil Service', *Modern Asian Studies*, VII, 1973, pp. 47-73. B. Spangenberg, 'The Problem of Recruitment to the Indian Civil Service during the Late Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXX, 2, February 1971, pp. 341-60.
3. Sir T. Creagh-Coen, *The Indian Political Service: a Study in Indirect Rule*, London, 1971.
4. Minute by Lytton, 28 May 1876, IOL, Crown Representative Records [CRR], Secret Internal, June 1888, pp. 74-6.



5. Cross to Dufferin, 11 May 1888, IOL, Cross P., XVIII, Letter Book 2, p. 79.
6. Hoare to Davidson, 16 February 1932, IOL, Templewood P., XIV.
7. Davidson to Hoare, 20 February 1932, *ibid*.
8. This has recently been implied about other branches of the services, and there is no reason to think that the Political Service was blessed with any better material than the I.C.S. at large. Indeed, in that it recruited both from the I.C.S. and from the Staff Corps of the Indian Army, the likelihood is that the average level of educational attainment in the Political Service was actually inferior. Spangenberg, 'Recruitment', p. 341. See the disparaging opinions of the I.C.S. held by English contemporaries which Spangenberg quotes, p. 353.
9. Memo. by W. Lee-Warner, Political Secretary to the Govt. of Bombay, for the Adjutant General's Dept., 8 July 1892, Maharashtra Secretariat Record Office, Bombay Political Department Records [BPDR], 1892, CLIX, c1462.
10. Reference is made in this paper both to the Indian Political Service and to the Bombay Political Service or sometimes to the 'Bombay cadre'. Until the 1920s, relations with the Indian states were conducted jointly by the Government of India and by the provincial governments in whose territories they were situated. Bombay, however, was unique in that it alone boasted a separate political cadre (with a strength of about 40 compared with 200 or so in the all-India service). Except for superficial differences in scales of pay and rates of promotion, the two cadres were identical. The two cadres were merged in 1924.
11. P. Woodruff, *The Men who Ruled India*, II, London, 1954, p. 88.
12. Even the Political Superintendency of Aden, a comparatively important post, impressed Lord Morley as being a 'terrible bore'. Morley to Lamington, Governor of Bombay, 17 May 1907, IOL, Lamington P., p. 63.
13. *Report on Civil Salaries in India*, 1859, p. 5.
14. Parliamentary Papers [PP], pp. 511-15, Sessional Papers [SP], No. 16 of [10 February] 1898.
15. These were usually known as 'residencies'.
16. See succeeding paragraphs of this section.
17. CRR, Pol.-P, 45 (1) of 1939.
18. Major G.R. Goodfellow, P.A. Kutch, to Political Secretary, Govt. of Bombay, 10 February 1876. Political and Secret Letters and Enclosures Received from Bombay [PSLERB], IV, January-August 1876.
19. Political despatch from the Secretary of State to the Govt. of Bombay, No. 27 of 23 December 1880. Political and Secret Despatches to Bombay [PSDTB].
20. Hoare to Lord Willingdon, 28 January 1932, Templewood P., I.
21. Political despatch from the Govt. of Bombay to the Secretary of State, No. 68 of 13 November 1880, PSLERB, 18, September-December 1880, p. 627.
22. BPD, 1881, LXXIII, c420.
23. Derived from *Bombay Civil Lists* 1877-1901. I have no comparable figures for agencies under the Govt. of India. My impression is that the same trend was in operation.
24. Note by Major A.S. Meek, P.A. Mahi Kantha, 29 January 1927, CRR, Pol.-P, No. 575-P of 1927. See also, J.B. Peile, P.A. Kathiawar to the Political

- Secretary, Govt. of Bombay, 4 November 1881. PSLERB, 21, October–December 1881, p. 424.
25. As late as the 1930s some of the smaller states in Bombay, Rajputana, Central India, and Orissa did not possess made roads, let alone railways. Such trains as did exist were usually slow and uncomfortable. The express plying between Junagadh and Rajkot took, in 1940, 5½ hours to travel 62 miles. A.J. Hopkinson, AGG Kathiawar, weekly report for 16–22 January 1940, in Zetland to Linlithgow, 28 February 1940, IOL, Zetland P., XII.
  26. Resident, Deccan States, to the Political Secretary, Govt. of India, No. C23/29, 5 February 1939, CRR, Pol.–P No. 40 (17) of 1939. See also Foreign and Political despatch from the Govt. of India to the Secretary of State, No. 7 (Secret-Special), 13 September 1930, IOL, Pol. (Internal) Collections, XI/7 (2).
  27. A.H.A. Simcox, Collector and P.A., Poona, to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Bombay, 13 August 1906, CRR, Confdl. A, Internal A. 1906, No. 8.
  28. Lt. Col. G.B. O'Donnell, P.A. Mahi Kantha, to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Bombay, 26 September 1906, *ibid.*, 1907, No. 6.
  29. Lt. Col. S.G. Knox, Resident, Hyderabad, to the Political Secretary, Govt. of India, No. R-24, 11 March 1922; and Note by Knox, 11 March 1922, CRR, Internal I, No. 633 of 1922.
  30. Note by J.P. Thompson, Political Secretary, Govt. of India, 19 May 1922.
  31. The Kathiawar Agency had up to a dozen: six European Assistants, and six Indian 'Deputy Assistants', and in 1910 employed a staff of 369—293 in the *thana* administration and 76 in the agency cutcherries. BPD, 1910, LXX, c588.
  32. Brig. Gen. C.A. Cunningham, Resident, Aden, to the Political Secretary, Bombay, No. IR, 15 January 1899, BPD, 1899, CLVII, c1017.
  33. There are close parallels here with district administration. See R. Frykenberg, *Guntur District, 1788–1848: a History of Local Influence and Central Authority in South India*, Oxford, 1965.
  34. Major C. Buckle, P.A. Rewa Kantha, to the Political Secretary Bombay, No. 683/130, 20 December 1861, Collections to Bombay Political Despatches [CBPD], XLV, 1864, p. 11
  35. N. Lullubhai to the Political Secretary, 3 February 1863, *ibid.*
  36. *Times of India*, 25 March 1864, p. 3.
  37. Minute by Lee-Warner, Political Secretary, Bombay, 11 May 1894, BPD, 1894, XCIII, c181.
  38. Foreign Department [FD], Internal A, March 1911, No. 5.
  39. *Report on the Administration of the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1871–2*, p. 119.
  40. Encl. No. 1 in Encl. 16 in Finance letter, the Govt. of India to the Secretary of State, No. 378 of 1906, IOL, Political and Secret Subject Files [PSSF], CXIII, 1912, No. 4391, Part I, p. 80.
  41. Secretary of State to the Govt. of Bombay, No. 19, 18 March 1869, Political Despatches to Bombay [PDTB], XI.
  42. Secret note by R.E. Wingate, Deputy Secretary, Political Dept., Govt. of India, 23 May 1933, CRR, Pol.–P, 1933.
  43. Statistics compiled from Administration Reports, Gazetteers, Directories, etc.

44. *Bombay Presidency Administration Report 1876-7*, p. iii.
45. A.C. Lothian, 'Report on the Constitutional Position of States under the Governments of Bihar, Orissa, and the Central Provinces', 1932, pp. 20-1, IOL, Lothian P., File 3.
46. It was common practice to give over the charge of small states to Indian Deputy-Assistant Political Agents, or sometimes to tahsildars seconded from British India.
47. PSLERB, LIV, 1910-11, p. 2680.
48. Lt. Col. Ferris, P.A. Kolhapur, to the Political Secretary, Govt. of Bombay, No. 27, 27 March 1905, BPD, 1905, CXXXVII, c669.
49. Minute by C.H.A. Hill, Political Secretary, Bombay, [?] October 1904, BPD, 1905, CXLIV, c67.
50. 'Rules Regulating the Admission of Junior Military Officers to the Political Department of the Government of India', Notifications, No. 2016-Est. A, 31 August 1914; and No. 135-Est. A, 25 January 1916.
51. Report submitted with application for political employ from Lt. W.R. Daniell, 123rd Outram's Rifles, BPD, 1906, XXIX, c305. For other examples, see Confdl. report by Col. C. Wodehouse, Acting P.A. Kathiawar, to the Political Secretary, Bombay, No. 27/4, 16 January 1888, BPD, 1888, CXCVIII, c262.
52. 'Handing Over Note', 15 November 1910, IOL, Butler P., LXVII.
53. F.V. Wylie, Political Adviser to the Crown Representative, to P. Patrick, Political Secretary, India Office, No. F 294-P/42, 11 November 1943, IOL, Political (Internal) Collections, 13/99A.
54. Linlithgow to Zetland, 22 June 1936, IOL, Zetland P., XIII; and 13 December 1938, *ibid.*, 13/14, Part 2.
55. *Third Report of the Select Committee on East India Finance*, 1873, PPSP, 354 of 1873, XII, p. 565 (22 July 1873).
56. Political Secretary, Bombay, to Foreign Secretary, Govt. of India, n.d., BPC, 1890, CLXXIII, c1449.
57. Minute by H.O. Quin, Political Secretary, Bombay, 5 February 1908, *ibid.*, 1908, CXVI, c899.
58. J.L. Jenkins, Acting Political Secretary, Bombay, to J.H. DuBoulay, Private Secretary to the Governor of Bombay, 1 January 1902, *ibid.*, 1902 XVII-A, c25.
59. Temple to Sir R. Montgomery, 6 June 1878, IOL, Temple P., CLXXXIX, p. 272.
60. It seems he was referring to the constitutional changes embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919, which caused a wave of 'die-hard' resignations from the services. Memo by the Resident, Jaipur, No. 113-P/478/27, 29 November 1929, CRR, Reforms-R, No. 122, 1929.
61. Appendix 13 to Memorial Lt. Col. G.E. Hyde-Cates, 1907, enclosure No. 1 in Political letter from the Govt. of India to the Secretary of State, No. 255, 1909, PSSF, CXIV, 1912, No. 4391/2, P4914/09.
62. Minute by H.O. Quin, 5 February 1908, BPD, 1908, CXVI, 1899.
63. Resolution of the Govt. of Bombay No. 5605 of 10 September 1873, BPP, vol. 480 (1873).
64. G.W. Vidal to the Foreign Secretary, Govt. of India, No. 1240, 15 February 1896, J. and P., DCXCIV, No. 358, 1902.

65. *The Pioneer*, 22 August 1901, p. 6.
66. Lt.-Col. W.B. Ferris' Memo. in Ferris, P.A. Kolhapur, to the Political Secretary, Bombay, No. 27 (Confdl.) 29 March 1905, *ibid.* See also, Capt. R.P. Colomb to W. Lee-Warner, Political Secretary, Bombay, 23 July 1892, LXXXVIII, 1892, c53.
67. Though this advantage did not carry over into the higher grades (see above). According to one source, about half the officers recruited to the Bombay Political Dept. in the late nineteenth century fell into this category.
68. P.S.V. Fitzgerald, Supt., Palanpur, to the Political Secretary, Bombay, 8 April 1903, *ibid.*, 1905. If such was a candidate's intention, he took pains to conceal it from the Secretariat, for married men were not welcomed as recruits to the Political Dept.
69. Ferris' Memo., *loc. cit.*
70. E. Grimwood, *My Three Years in Manipur, and Escape from the Recent Mutiny*, London, 1891, p. 3.
71. [India: Central] Legislative Assembly [LA] *Debates*; 1939, II, p. 1001. There were many more, of course, in subordinate positions.
72. *LA Debates*, 1946, IV, p. 2699.
73. Maj. Garde Brath, Political Resident, Aden, to the Political Secretary, Bombay, No. C-179, 23 July 1909, BPD, 1910, LXX-A, c615.
74. F.G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India*, Princeton, 1967, Ch. VI.
75. Note by H. Butler, 15 November 1910, Butler P., LXVII.
76. Note by Barton, 15 May 1927, CRR, Pol.-P, 575 of 1927.
77. Lt. Col. D.M. Field, P.A. Southern States of Central India and Malwa, to the Secretary, AGG Central India, No. 102, 21 April 1927, *ibid.*, 652 of 1927.
78. Note by Keyes on the Simon Report, in letter to the Viceroy's Private Secretary, No. 985-C, 2 July 1930, IOL, Keyes P., XXVIII.
79. Note by Glancy, 24 April 1927, CRR, Pol.-P, 575 of 1927.
80. Note, 24 March 1932, Templewood P., XIV. See also Note by Glancy, 18 January 1933, IOL, Pol. (Internal) Collections, 11/58 (1).
81. Barbara Ramusack has drawn my attention to A.C. Lothian's correspondence with Halifax (Lord Irwin) in which he takes up the cudgels on the Political Department's behalf, and points the finger at the India Office.
82. I say this bearing in mind that a substantial minority did in fact accede, and that the accession of only a few more larger states would have sufficed to tip the balance.
83. From an exchange rate of 2/- Stg. in 1880, to 1/3d in 1893.
84. Harris to the Secretary of State, 18 August 1892, IOL, Harris P., Bundle 1.
85. In the interim, morale continued to decline. By 1904 the military cadre in Bombay especially was close to revolt. A flood of memorials to Calcutta in 1904 and to Whitehall in 1907, testified to the military's plight and desperation.
86. *Charles Gonne*: appointed B.C.S. from Haileybury 1843; Assist. Coll. Magst. & Assist. Judge & Sessions Judge 1854-61; Judge of Small Cause Court Ahmednagar 1861; Joint Judge and S.J. Thana 1853; ditto Poona 1864; Sec. to Govt. Pol. Judicial & Secret Depts. October 1864-April 1884 (Chief Sec. from 1879); Temp. Member of Council, Bombay, March 1884; retired 1885.



87. *William Lee-Warner*: Rugby and St. Johns, Cambridge; I.C.S. 1869; Assist. Coll. & Magst. 1869-70; on special duty Pol. & Judicial Dept. 1871; Director Public Instruction, Berar, February 1872; Priv. Sec., Gov. of Bombay May 1872; reverted to special duty November 1874 (Under Sec. Pol. etc. Depts. November 1874-January 1875 and May 1875-January 1876); Priv. Sec., Gov., January-November 1876; Assist. Coll. & Magst. December 1876-82; Member Education Comm. 1882; attached to Foreign Dept. 1884; Acting Director of Public Instruction, Bombay 1885; on special duty Foreign Dept. 1885-6; Acting P.A. Kolhapur January 1886-August 1887; Sec. to Bombay Pol. etc. Depts. August 1887-93; Member Viceroy's Council 1893-4; Resdt. Mysore February-September 1895; Sec. Pol. & Secret Dept. India Office 1895-1902; Member, Council of India 1902-12.
88. The advent of responsible government in the provinces made it necessary to distinguish between the Viceroy's role of chief executive officer in British India and that of sovereign representative in matters affecting the states, which were to be excluded from the responsibilities of the planned federal government.
89. Linlithgow to Zetland, 25 September 1939, Zetland P., XVIII.
90. Linlithgow to Zetland, 9 June 1939, *ibid.*, XVII.
91. Linlithgow to Zetland, 28 February 1939, *ibid.*
92. Linlithgow to Zetland, 13/14 December 1939, *ibid.*, XVIII.
93. Linlithgow to Zetland, 9 June 1939, *ibid.*, XVII. Corfield duly took over in 1945.
94. Memo. by Melville, Political Dept., 12 July 1886, BPD, 1886, CLXXXIX, c1183.
95. *Edinburgh Review*, CLXXXVI, July 1897, p. 208.
96. Note by J.C. Walton, Political Dept., India Office, 24 March 1930, Pol. (Internal) Collections, 11/14.
97. An aspiration born equally of a genuine commitment to the patrimonial system of government, and a cynical desire to use the princes as political counterweights to the Congress and its middle-class allies.
98. *Political Department Manual*, 'Introduction—General Instructions', para. 2.
99. Note by Lt. Col. R.J.C. Burke, Resident, Baroda, 25 April 1927, CRR, Pol.-P, No. 652 of 1927.
100. Note by E.H. Kealy, Agent to the Governor-General in Central India, in letter to the Political Secretary, Govt. of India, No. 37-P, 11 June 1927, CRR, Pol.-P, No. 652 of 1927.
101. Fitze, P.A. Baghelkhand, to the Secretary to the AGG Central India, No. 60, 20 April 1927, *ibid.*
102. Note by Wingate, 18 August 1934, Pol. (Internal) Collections, 11/7 (2).
103. Glancy to Patrick, India Office, No. 1670, 3 December 1934, *ibid.*, 11/7 (3).
104. Linlithgow to Zetland, 21 February 1939, Zetland P., XVII.
105. Davidson to Hoare, 15 April 1932, Templewood P., XIV.
106. J.A.O. Fitzpatrick to the Political Secretary, Govt. of India, No. 58 R/P-86-28, 20 June 1930, CRR, Reforms-R, No. 122 of 1929.
107. Memo. by Patrick, Political Secretary, India Office, 27 October 1934, Pol. (Internal) Collections, 11/7 (2).

108. Minute by Glancy, 29 October 1934; and note on proceedings of a meeting between the Viceroy and representatives of the princes at Simla on 22 September 1932., *ibid.*
109. The Govt. of India themselves acknowledged this when commenting on the Butler Commission Report of 1929. Foreign and Political dispatch to the Secretary of State, No. 7 (Secret-Special), 13 September 1930, *ibid.*
110. Davidson to Hoare, 20 February 1932, Templewood P., XIV. Keyes P., XXXI.

# 9

## The Demise of the Princely Order: A Reassessment

JAMES MANOR

### I

The process by which princely rule in India was brought to an end has been discussed at great length by writers of widely differing viewpoints. The comments of participants in Indian states' affairs between 1935 and 1950 have been marked by mutual recrimination between those who hastened the liquidation of the princely order and those who wished to see it preserved in some form.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the bitterness which surrounds this controversy is derived from the assumption by all concerned that events between 1935 and 1950—and most especially those which occurred between 1945 and 1948—were decisive to the fate of princely authority. The analyses of the three commentators who have dealt rather more objectively with the problem are also based upon the assumption that the drama might have had another ending had the various actors handled their roles differently in those years.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, these writers devote their attention wholly or substantially to events after 1935.

The present chapter has two purposes. First, it will show that this assumption is incorrect—that the fate of the princely order was sealed long before 1935. Having established that, the controversies which have grown up round the demise of princely rule will be examined in the light of this rather different historical perspective to see what insights emerge. The first section of this essay reviews the development of British policy towards the princes and conditions within the Indian states during the first half of the twentieth century. The aim of this section is to provide in broad outline the argument that, by the mid-1930s, the princely order was doomed. The second section of the chapter examines in detail the position of the smaller Indian states after 1935, the case which demonstrates more clearly

than any other the hopelessness of the princes' situation at that time, and then briefly surveys the similar predicament of the larger states. The concluding section offers a reassessment, given these new perspectives, of events surrounding the collapse of princely rule.

## II

The policies of the British crown in India from 1858 onwards had always contained contradictory elements. On the one hand, there was the concern with the maintenance of the imperial enterprise—the autocratic, repressive side of the split personality of the raj. On the other was the liberal aspect of empire, the 'civilizing mission' which by the end of the nineteenth century had created expectations in the minds of many Indians of progress towards self-rule on democratic lines. After the departure of Curzon from India, policies in British India tended increasingly to prepare the way for the fulfilment of those expectations with the creation in 1909 and 1919 of new and more powerful elective institutions and the explicit declaration in 1917 that Indian self-rule was the ultimate aim of His Majesty's Government. These political advances did not of course entirely eclipse the more autocratic side of policy in British India, and in princely India, autocracy was allowed to flourish to an extent unknown for many decades.

During the late nineteenth century and culminating in Curzon's viceroyalty,<sup>3</sup> the British intervened increasingly in the internal affairs of Indian states in order to mitigate the most severe abuses of princely autocrats. The arrival of Lord Minto, however, brought a reversal of this trend. With the increasing liberalization of British India's political system and the growing strength of the Indian National Congress, it was felt that the support of the princes might ultimately prove essential to the maintenance of British control in the subcontinent. Consequently, Minto publicly took a step away from Curzon's interventionism by stating that the great variety which existed among the princely states required a wide variety of approaches to the problems of the states.<sup>4</sup> Lord Hardinge, who had to court the support of the princes for the war effort, tipped the balance still further away from interference in states' internal affairs.<sup>5</sup>

When the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms bestowed much greater powers upon elected politicians, the British felt it necessary to adopt



a *laissez-faire* policy towards the states, to which there were few exceptions over the next two decades,<sup>6</sup> in order to assure themselves of a counterweight to Indian nationalism and democratic forces generally. Under Chelmsford, new rules were codified to guide officers of the Political Department in their dealings with the states. The new code did not formally forfeit the right of the paramount power to intervene in a state's internal affairs without the ruler's consent. But 'where instructions [from British Residents and Agents to rulers] were once mandatory they have now ceased to be so . . .'. Rulers were protected under the code from drastic change being imposed upon them during the years of their minority.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the British were so chary of ruffling the sensibilities of rulers that they refused to press for the abolition of forms of forced labour and slavery, which they knew to exist in the states, after signing the League of Nations agreement to do so.<sup>8</sup>

Relations between the British and the princes came to be characterized more by consultation as between partners than control of subordinate by superior, particularly after the establishment of the Chamber of Princes in 1921 which allowed rulers direct access to the Delhi authorities. Procedures were established in 1920 and 1932 for the arbitration of disputes between states and the Crown,<sup>9</sup> and viceregal pronouncements by Irwin in 1926 and Willingdon in 1932 further confirmed the policy of permissiveness towards the princes.<sup>10</sup>

Thus between 1905 and the mid-1930s, as the British Indian political system steadily became more democratic and as the Congress developed into a credible alternative to the raj, princely India's autocrats were given a free hand to govern according to whim. The princes were allowed to persist in their autocratic ways not *in spite* of events in British India, but rather *because* of them. As advances were made in the provinces towards the fulfilment of the promise of the liberal side of empire, the British still clung to the desire to maintain their sway over the subcontinent in some form for as long as possible. They used the states for this purpose. As a consequence, during the late 1920s and early 1930s, princely India came increasingly to seem the purest embodiment of the autocratic side of Britain's split personality in India, at the very time when the liquidation of autocracy was coming to seem increasingly certain and near.

During the 1930s, some of the more perceptive participants in

states' affairs recognized that the princes were being killed with kindness, that they were being set up for sacrifice in order to further the British aim of prolonging the lifespan of the raj. Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV, whose reasonably enlightened reign in Mysore extended from 1902 to 1940, told Linlithgow at an interview in 1938 that the princes could not hope to survive in any form alongside democratically-governed provinces unless they were taken severely in hand and compelled to learn and apply the principles of good government as had happened to him during his minority in Curzon's day.<sup>11</sup> And elsewhere in this volume Ian Copland has cited a plea by a political officer in 1934 for a policy of compulsory reform in the states as the only means of saving the princes from extinction in the years ahead.<sup>12</sup>

Not surprisingly, these voices went unheeded. Even if compulsion had been applied, it was clearly too late to prepare most princes for the changes which lay ahead, given the momentum which the nationalist democrats had developed by the mid-1930s. And the weight of past practices and considerations of expediency prevented the British from adopting a policy of compulsion in their dealings with princely India.

This is clear from their reaction to the upsurge of nationalist activity in some states in late 1937 and 1938. The British (and indeed, the leaders of the National Congress) greatly overestimated the strength of the Praja Mandals and state Congress organizations, but that point is less important here than the fact that they were genuinely anxious over the threat of popular disruption to most princely regimes. In 1938 and after, the Political Department was ordered to try to *persuade* the princes to pursue constitutional and administrative reform and to remove abuses which might cause popular discontent.<sup>13</sup> The paltry response which these pleas produced soon demonstrated that nothing short of compulsion could bring even modest change in the states.<sup>14</sup> But by the early 1940s, the policy of acting only with the consent of rulers—which was itself an innovation on practices common during the late nineteenth century—was seen as an integral part of the Crown's treaty obligations to the princes. This view was historically inaccurate.<sup>15</sup> But policies which had existed over three decades died hard, particularly in wartime when it would have been inexpedient to risk political and financial support which the princes could offer the British cause.

The influence of such considerations upon British policy and the hopelessness of the princes' position will emerge more clearly from a detailed examination of the plight of the smaller states during the last years of British rule. It is to this which we now turn.

### III

The smaller states offer the most telling evidence that the fate of the princely order had been sealed well before 1935 by the permissive treatment which nearly all states had received from the paramount power. The category of 'smaller states' was defined in various ways. But whatever definition was used, an overwhelming majority of the 565 or so Indian states fell within the category, as did a substantial proportion of princely subjects.<sup>16</sup> However, the smaller states derive their importance less from such statistics than from three facts concerning their position during the late 1930s and early 1940s. First, they represented the princely order's most vulnerable flank inasmuch as they were extremely disorganized, easily panicked and highly incapable of coping with the threat of change. Second, it was in their dealings with the smaller states that the British made their only vigorous effort to prepare the princes for the future.<sup>17</sup> And third, the failure of that effort is evident from the fact that it was the smaller states which provided Vallabhbhai Patel and V.P. Menon with an opening (beginning in the Orissa states in December 1947) in their effort to force the princely order to capitulate utterly to the demand for parliamentary democracy.

The rulers of the smaller states themselves, and the structure of the princely order, were in part responsible for the hopelessness of their position after 1935. Most states in the late 1930s had made little or no effort towards constitutional advance. Given the growth of populist politics in British India and the restlessness of some princely subjects for a voice in the political process, it was clear to the British that some liberalization was urgently required in the princely states. But the very backwardness of most states, particularly the smaller ones, nullified the possibility of decisive reformist action. 'There was an obvious danger in giving too great an advance at the outset . . . lest the mechanisms of government in various states be disrupted and the popular restlessness be intensified. The British moved cautiously and 'the direction and pace [of constitutional reform] . . . were matters for the Rulers to decide'.<sup>18</sup>

The highly irrational reactions of a great many rulers of smaller

states to the merest hint of a change in their situation thwarted efforts to aid them. The inability of the British in 1938 and 1939 to persuade provincial Congress governments to treat neighbouring princely regimes warmly caused panic in small states, particularly in Orissa and Central India, about 'the willingness or capacity of the Crown Representative [the title borne by the Viceroy in dealing with the states] to protect them'.<sup>19</sup> The consequent panic among many princes caused them to react with confusion and/or recalcitrance to suggestions designed to enhance their ability to survive.<sup>20</sup>

Even on those rare occasions when a ruler could be persuaded to introduce changes within his state, his relationship with his neighbours could delay or even prevent their implementation. The British feared that zealous administrative or constitutional reforms in one state might cause the governments of nearby rulers to appear especially backward and catalyse dissidence among their subjects. As a result, the Agents of the Political Department were instructed to consult a reformist prince's neighbours before permitting changes in his administration or constitution.<sup>21</sup> This made the reform process hopelessly cumbersome.

This problem of suspicion between neighbours, this fear of 'too great a surrender of their cherished "sovereignty"', also bedevilled efforts to promote co-operation and joint administration between states.<sup>22</sup> It was sometimes possible to interest rulers in joint schemes, but they often preferred to link up with distant princes—particularly their own clansmen—rather than with those geographically near at hand.<sup>23</sup> And even when administrative co-operation was arranged on such preliminary matters as police and judicial services, it often worked so badly that rulers were prejudiced against any further co-operation.<sup>24</sup> This was mainly the result of disenchantment among wealthier states in such groupings at having to bear an inordinate share of the financial burden.<sup>25</sup>

Despite all of this, the greater share of the responsibility for the failure of the smaller states to adjust to changing conditions lies not with the rulers themselves but with the British. Two factors contributed to this failure: the structure through which the British dealt with the states and the circumstances in which the British found themselves in their relationship with the princes.

The structure which had been developed to handle princely affairs was the Political Department.<sup>26</sup> On several counts, the Department was very ill-suited to the task of promoting administrative



and constitutional change in princely India. First, on purely technical grounds, it was incapable of fulfilling this task. Until the late 1930s, Political Agents had acted as rather aloof watchdogs over states' affairs. As a result, few of them possessed the experience of direct administration which would have been required to initiate modernization in the small states with their incompetent or non-existent bureaucracies.<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere in this volume (pp. 286–92), Ian Copland has shown that the Political Department's officers were recruited according to criteria which ensured that many of them would be less than fully capable of administrative tasks, and that, from the late nineteenth century onwards, the service was seldom thought to be equal to the tasks which faced it.

Even if these men had the expertise required, the Department's cadre was clearly too small to accomplish their post-1937 assignment. Copland has shown that for several decades before 1937, the service was chronically short of manpower and that this problem had been exacerbated during the 1920s when the number of smaller political agencies had been reduced in an effort aimed at consolidating the structure of the service. The burden of promoting reforms in the small states was imposed upon them without any reduction in their normal duties so that the time available was inadequate to the task.<sup>28</sup> And from early 1940, when the 'phoney war' in Europe ended, until 1945, Political Agents were so heavily preoccupied with winning and maintaining the support of the states for the war effort that the reformist effort became a secondary concern.<sup>29</sup> This is demonstrated by the slow pace at which the Department's machinery operated on the amalgamation and reform of smaller states, even in such simple matters as information-gathering.<sup>30</sup>

If the *inability* of the Political Service to serve as an effective force for change was a serious obstacle, the *unwillingness* of many political officers to do so rendered the situation thoroughly impossible. Ian Copland has argued elsewhere in this volume that the views of political servants tended to be anti-democratic on Indian questions, that Agents and Residents often sympathized with rulers with whom they dealt,<sup>31</sup> and that many of them worked to sabotage federation—a much tamer reform package than those which came after—because they saw in it a threat to the princes. This view is corroborated by evidence from the years after 1938 when the British effort to seek change in princely India developed. As early as

mid-1939, it was clear that if Residents were not 'told by the Viceroy that they must produce results, it is to be feared that nothing will happen . . .'.<sup>32</sup> And the ' . . . Political Officers are too ready to find difficulties too insurmountable [*sic*] . . .'.<sup>33</sup>

The task of preparing the small states for an uncertain future was rendered all the more hopeless by the circumstances in which the British found themselves. A mood of listlessness towards the problem of modernizing the states existed not only among Political Agents but in Delhi and in London as well. This mood was the result of low expectations which British officials had about the ability after decades of *laissez-faire* treatment of the princes generally, and of the smaller states in particular, to react creatively to the crisis which faced them. The merest signs of progress in individual states were greeted with considerable surprise in British circles.<sup>34</sup> When the Maharaja of Orchha responded to urgings that he co-operate with nearby rulers by offering to work for a fully-integrated union, the Agent for Central India 'was at the time inclined to think that His Highness was pulling my leg'.<sup>35</sup>

It is clear, particularly from reactions to 'periodic reports on 'Constitutional and Administrative Reforms' in the states during the early 1940s that most British officials had reached the unspoken conclusion that it was too late to save the smaller states.<sup>36</sup> It followed that the British should compel the smaller states to reform themselves and combine with other princes for their own good, but Linlithgow—even after expressing publicly his anxiety over the ability of these states to survive—found himself prevented by the exigencies of the war effort and the mood of the Political Department from doing so.<sup>37</sup>

On his arrival, Wavell was much more impatient. He felt that the avoidance of compulsion

. . . simply amounts to marking time. We shall have to come out in the open with the Princes sooner or later. We are at present being dishonest in pretending we can maintain all these small States, knowing full well that in practice we shall be unable to . . .<sup>38</sup>

But nearly a year later, in November 1944, Wavell had still found that the same forces had prevented him from acting. He urged again that the British should 'now . . . [make a] plain statement of our intentions about the future of the little States'.<sup>39</sup>

But once again, conditions (particularly the need for princely

unity in the war effort) prevented him from acting. In April 1945, when the Viceroy met officials at the India Office, it was decided that compulsion must finally be used with the small states. But they left the implementation of this to Sir Conrad Corfield who was not to take up his post as Political Adviser to Wavell until July and was not expected to undertake new policy initiatives until several months thereafter.<sup>40</sup> As a result, moves to force a rationalization of the smaller states came far too late.

Lest the focus of this analysis seem too narrow, let us briefly consider the larger princely states. Both the political conditions within these states and their relations with the paramount power differed somewhat from those of the smaller states. But they were at one with the smaller states in their inability to cope with the changes which occurred in India in this period.

With a few exotic exceptions, the larger states possessed more complex and sophisticated administrative structures than the smaller states. This is not to say that they relied primarily upon formal bureaucracies in the manner of the British Indian provinces. Where such machinery was found, pre-existing structures of a more informal type—often derived from caste or clan—usually possessed more power than these modern creations. In other cases, bureaucracies were restrained from intruding upon the prerogatives of traditional elites at the local level. But it can at least be said that bureaucratic structures of some sort existed in most larger states.

Many of these states offered some response to the British desire for advance towards institutions which permitted non-officials to have some voice in public affairs. But these reforms had very little substance. Even the most progressive rulers were clearly unwilling to share power with elected politicians. The Maharaja of Mysore, who had urged the Viceroy to act forcefully to confront his fellow-princes with the stark realities of modern times, himself refused to grant significant powers to non-officials.<sup>41</sup> And his younger and more liberal successor, in the state which had been ahead of British India in creating a large elected assembly, tenaciously resisted demands for popular sovereignty until very severe agitation forced him to yield in late 1947.<sup>42</sup>

If the larger states were less anachronistic than the smaller, they were still so backward that an early and systematic effort by the British to *impose* major reforms was needed if these princes were to begin seriously to prepare for the day when the British would leave

India. The British knew this,<sup>43</sup> but the effort was never made.

The British would have preferred to see at least some of the states survive a transfer of power in some modified form as an integral part of a new Indian union.<sup>44</sup> But quite apart from the political transformations that were needed within the states to give them some hope of survival, there were serious obstacles in the way of the princes agreeing to join such a union. With the lapse of paramountcy, they would become free agents, and from the early 1940s it was clear that enticements would be required to persuade them to take this step. The only effective enticements would be promises of protection by the Crown should princes decide, after a period as members of the union, to go it alone.

Not surprisingly, the British were reluctant to issue such promises. They would have made the British hostage to princely whim and could generate bitter resentment among the leaders of the new India. To make matters worse, these promises could not possibly be kept, so the British would eventually have appeared not only reactionary but incompetent.<sup>45</sup> In both public and private statements to the princes, the British kept well clear of such promises, saying only that the Crown would fulfil its treaty obligations to the states.

This was far too vague a promise to ease princely anxieties. Most rulers would have doubted the British ability to live up to detailed assurances had they been given, but this refusal to go into detail raised questions not only about British power but about British intentions as well. It only reinforced the rulers' natural inclination to ignore suggestions from New Delhi that they institute major policy reforms.

The key word here is 'suggestions'. The British were unwilling to use their powers to *compel* substantial reforms in larger states. They consistently 'urged' reforms upon rulers from the late 1930s onward. But a policy of 'abstention from imposition', from tendering formal advice which princes were bound to accept, was adhered to with equal consistency and was endorsed at cabinet level in Britain.<sup>46</sup> And the reforms which were 'urged' upon the princes fell far short of what was required. They used terms such as 'responsive rather than democratic government', meaning 'only an approximation of representative institutions'.<sup>47</sup>

Why did the British fail to press the larger states? In part it was because they needed the princes too much, particularly up to 1945. Most of the rulers of larger states contributed generously to the war



effort, and this took precedence over political issues in India until the Japanese surrender. Throughout the war the British were reluctant to alienate these princes. During the Quit India Movement, the rulers offered valuable assistance in containing the nationalists. And at least until the Labour Party's electoral victory in 1945, British officials in London and New Delhi assumed that they had much more time to prepare for the transfer of power than was actually available. They therefore lacked the sense of urgency that the situation demanded.

But as important as any of these things was a partial awareness in the minds of most British policy-makers—apart from the true believers of the Political Department—that it was too late to save the princes, small or large. If it never fully crystallized in their minds, this idea must still have weighed upon them as they reviewed the uninspiring choice of policies that lay before them.

They could 'urge' the rulers to make changes in their *statés*, but that alone was patently inadequate. After decades of non-interference, the princes were too accustomed to having their own way within their domains. The British could offer enticements, but in order to make any impact, these would have needed to take the form of assurances that would have further ensnared the Crown in an unstable and increasingly embarrassing relationship. The only reliable way to bring substantial change to the states was to impose it. But to do so would be to change the rules of politics so drastically that the princes would have been unable to cope. Their stunned reaction would have mixed shrill accusations of bad faith with desperate, perhaps brutal acts of obstruction—hardly a promising start on the road to modernity.

Having exhausted their stock of futile alternatives, the British returned to the least troublesome and least promising of the lot.<sup>49</sup> In seeking only to persuade the rulers, they were in effect admitting that they had succeeded too well since the days of Curzon in developing an anachronistic counterweight to nationalism. The princely order was beyond redemption and had been for some considerable time.

#### IV

Once it is accepted that the events which occurred between 1935 and 1950 (and particularly those between 1945 and 1948) were not decisive to the fate of the princes, it becomes possible to examine in

a more dispassionate atmosphere the accusations which those who sought to preserve the princely order and those who hastened its end have levelled against one another. This is a welcome development, for it is time that we faced the fact that a number of these charges—though usually overstated—contain a measure of truth.<sup>50</sup>

Nationalist writers, as victors in the struggle to control the princely states, have perhaps felt able to treat their old adversaries with magnanimity. Whatever the reason, a close reading of the material on this period indicates that in essence only one accusation has been made against those who worked for the survival of princely privilege.

It is first expressed in a set of charges against the highest officer of the Political Department, Sir Conrad Corfield, Political Adviser to Wavell and Mountbatten. He stands accused of 'failure to cooperate with his chief, the Crown Representative. . . .'<sup>51</sup> Nehru enlarged somewhat on this when he accused Corfield of 'misfeasance', the performance of a lawful act in a wrongful manner.<sup>52</sup> Elsewhere H.V.Hodson has said that Mountbatten 'was led to believe [almost certainly by Congress-leaders] that Sir Conrad and the Political Department under him were working to band the states together and make them an independent force in the new India'. Hodson adds that Mountbatten later realized that he was 'mistaken' but that a long talk with Corfield had revealed that the two were 'pulling in different directions' after which Mountbatten 'largely ignored the Political Department'.<sup>53</sup>

All of these charges, including that which Mountbatten disregarded against his Political Adviser, appear to be true to varying degrees. No one denies Corfield's 'failure to cooperate' on several key issues. Mountbatten himself came to believe this accusation, as the quotation from Hodson above indicates. Corfield has made it clear that he felt that Mountbatten was being unfaithful to the Crown's commitments to the princes and that he was violating his instructions from Attlee. Corfield uses this and the argument that he had the approval of the Secretary of State for India for his acts in defiance of the Viceroy's wishes to justify his refusal to co-operate.<sup>54</sup>

Nehru's charge that Corfield was guilty of 'misfeasance' raises the question of the details of these acts of defiance. For this, we have no better guide than Corfield himself. He had realized, soon after Mountbatten's arrival in India in late March 1947, that the new Viceroy had little interest in the survival of princely privilege and

little time to devote to states' affairs. In mid-May, he seized a chance to fly to London for consultations with the Secretary of State on the Political Department's plan for the dismantling of the apparatus of the raj in princely India. His main concern appears to have been to avoid a veto of the Political Department plan to have Residents and Agents destroy any documents embarrassing to the princes. This he managed to do and upon his return he took advantage of Mountbatten's absence to set the process in motion without the Viceroy's knowledge.<sup>55</sup> By mid-June, this had come to the attention of Nehru who thus made his charge at a meeting of the Viceroy and Indian political leaders. Mountbatten did not defend his Political Adviser because he had concluded as early as 3 June, after learning of the destruction of documents, that the Political Department was too sympathetic to the princes to serve as an instrument of his policies. As a result, he had practically ceased working through the Department at that date.<sup>56</sup> The charge of 'misfeasance' seems to be quite accurate in that Corfield had carefully obtained a strictly legal cover from the Secretary of State for acts which were clearly wrongful in light of the policies which Mountbatten was adopting in India.

Did Corfield wish to 'band the States together and make them an independent force in the new India'? There can be little doubt that he did. He never goes so far as Sir Arthur Lothian who wished that princely India could have formed a third dominion<sup>57</sup>—an absurd suggestion. But in his anger that Mountbatten did not aid the formation of a united front of princes against the emerging Congress government, he indicates that he sought such an independent role for the states.<sup>58</sup>

The accusation which is made against Corfield is also levelled against the Political Service as a whole. One of the quotations from Hodson noted above broadens the accusation against Corfield to include the Political Department. V.P. Menon echoes this with charges that the Department pursued a separate policy of its own.<sup>59</sup> This generalization of the charge into a conspiracy theory contains a good deal of truth, but it must not be taken at face value. When he realized that Mountbatten intended to assist the nationalists in their dealings with the states, Corfield called several of the strongest members of the Political Department to Delhi to assist him in resisting this effort. Nearly all political officers sympathized with the princes in the last month of the raj, and many aided Corfield in

his efforts to assist the rulers. But some political servants were simply too remote from Delhi to learn in detail of this effort. Many, and perhaps most, were too occupied with the tasks of closing down the political agencies and coping with the rush of events, including communal rioting in many areas, to take part in this campaign.<sup>60</sup>

Three inter-related accusations stand at the centre of the case made against the Indian nationalists by former political officers. First, it is charged that States Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel, and his chief aide, V.P. Menon, broke their promise to the princes, embodied in the Instrument of Accession signed in the summer of 1947, to refrain from interfering in princely affairs beyond three agreed subjects—defence, foreign affairs and communications. Additionally, they are said to have used unfair and unsavoury methods, blackmail, coercion or the threat of it, to compel the more reluctant princes to relinquish their powers. Finally, Patel and Menon are accused of having behaved cynically throughout this episode inasmuch as they are said to have known, even before the Instrument was signed, that it was a mere charade to beguile the princes.<sup>61</sup>

It is difficult to quarrel with the first charge. It is a matter of record that, during the year following the transfer of power, the princes were in effect told that the Instrument was unworkable in that it left them with too much autonomy.

There is more controversy over the methods employed to bring about the capitulation of the princes. The official ministry version of the integration of the states and Menon's own volume on the subject seek to give the appearance of a smooth transition by minimizing the use of pressure against rulers and the princes' recalcitrance.<sup>62</sup> But a close reading of Menon will indicate that threat of coercion was clearly used to force the rulers of small Orissa states to yield in December 1947<sup>63</sup>—a case which was crucial because it gave the campaign to subdue the princes the momentum which was so vital to its success in the months thereafter. C.C. Desai, an I.C.S. man who assisted Patel and Menon, has described the use of threats quite unambiguously.<sup>64</sup> Menon himself later conceded this to H.V. Hodson,<sup>65</sup> and the use of blackmail has been confirmed by persons close to V.P. Menon.<sup>66</sup> To say this is not to question the justification for these tactics—a problem which shall be dealt with later in this essay—but merely to observe that they were employed.



There remains the accusation that Patel and Menon cynically intended the Instrument of Accession, from its conception in June 1947, as a confidence trick against the princes. This problem is much more complex than the other two. It seems certain, given the insistence over many decades by every leading Congressman that swaraj in the fullest sense must come to all Indians, that Patel and Menon intended ultimately to incorporate the states into the new India in a more complete sense than provided for in the Instrument of Accession. But if the charge is true in this general sense, it is misleading when couched in the specific terms of a plot to hoodwink the princes. When one considers the hair-raising situation with which Patel and his Congress colleagues were faced in British India during July and August 1947, it seems unlikely that any detailed long-term plan was hatched. The Instrument was seen by all parties as a temporary document to prevent unnecessary dislocation until a formal constitutional structure of some sort could be worked out. There is no evidence to suggest that Patel or Menon had thought in specific terms beyond this step. After he had brought the rulers of some small Orissa states to heel in December 1947, Patel felt the need to justify his actions to Gandhi and Nehru lest they feel he had acted too impulsively. This suggests that Patel may have stumbled rather late upon a plan to deal with the princes, a plan which was at odds with the gradualist expectations of other Congress leaders. Menon has entitled his account of the events of the summer of 1947 'Stopping the Gap'<sup>67</sup> and this seems an appropriate choice of words.

The former political servants who have made these charges have also levelled accusations against India's last Viceroy. One such charge is never stated explicitly, but is subtly implied by Sir Conrad Corfield<sup>68</sup> and clearly implied by Sir Arthur Lothian<sup>69</sup> and Sir Edward Wakefield.<sup>70</sup> This is that Lord Mountbatten participated in Patel's and Menon's supposed acts of 'deceit' over the accession on the three subjects. They base this insinuation upon Mountbatten's use of charm and moral pressure in July and August 1947 to obtain the agreement of the princes to the Instrument of Accession. There is no question that he used very strong doses of each to persuade the princes to accede.<sup>71</sup> What is at issue are his motives for doing so and the question of whether he was party to a Patel-Menon plan to inveigle the princes into an untenable position.

On each point, the accusers have only a very tenuous case. To take the second problem first, we have already seen that there is

serious doubt as to whether Patel and Menon themselves, amidst the turmoil of that summer, had any prior plan to violate the agreement on the three subjects, other than a vague intention to consolidate the unity of India in some way at some future date. Mountbatten carried his support of the Instrument to the extreme of pretending to the princes and the Political Department that he had suggested its use to Patel and Menon,<sup>72</sup> when in reality Menon had done this.<sup>73</sup> But his description of the Instrument as a means of maintaining India's civic enterprise in a troubled time, as a 'basis on which common policies can be evolved in regard to the three subjects for the interim period, while the new constitution is being framed . . .'<sup>74</sup>—which did not bind the princes to participation in the union—all of this should be taken at face value. Menon's statement that he and Patel decided upon the abandonment of the three subjects without Mountbatten's knowledge confirms this.<sup>75</sup>

Motives are never easy to assess. But Mountbatten undoubtedly recognized the weakness of the princes' position (the result of their backwardness and their hopeless disunity), the inordinate dangers which princely recalcitrance could have posed in a situation already marred by communal strife and the pace at which events were moving. It thus seems likely that he believed that princely interests, and Indian interests generally, were best served by an orderly if partial integration of the states into the framework of the new dominion. H.V. Hodson has said that Mountbatten simply lacked the time, given the severe crisis in British India, to engage in a systematic examination of the likelihood of the Instrument's survival as the basis for future relations between the states and the new central government. In his view, Mountbatten believed that it was the best the princes could hope for under the perilous circumstances and therefore urged their accession.<sup>76</sup> This seems the most plausible answer to a question which may never be finally settled.

Corfield has further charged Mountbatten with violations of his instructions from Attlee and hence with 'breach of promise' and with disruption of the official structure for dealing with the states at a crucial time.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps in the most narrow sense, Mountbatten did violate the letter of Attlee's instructions. These stated that

It is not intended to bring paramountcy as a system to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power, but you are authorized, at such time as you think appropriate, to enter into negotiations with individual States for adjusting their relations with the Crown.<sup>78</sup>

Corfield, who could find no justification in orders from the Secretary of State for Mountbatten's efforts to persuade the princes to sign the Instrument, claimed that the instructions above did not provide grounds for those efforts. If interpreted narrowly, they do not.

But neither do they bar such efforts. The point here is that Mountbatten found his instructions inadequate to meet the urgencies of the moment. Preoccupied as he was with events in British India, he acted instinctively to prevent princely India from becoming yet another source of disintegration. In doing so, he may have violated the letter of his instructions. But this was surely understandable and consistent with his overriding mission, which was to achieve the smoothest possible end to British rule in India.

The disruption of the official structure for dealing with the states certainly occurred. Corfield would no doubt trace this event to Mountbatten's decision in June 1947 to rely upon the new States Ministry to manage relations with the princes, which in most areas left the Political Service the menial task of closing down the residencies. But a more balanced view might hold that the Political Service, and not least Sir Conrad Corfield himself, were, as we have seen, to blame for Mountbatten's decision.

One final charge<sup>79</sup> holds that the Congress leaders violated the terms of the transfer of power agreement with the British when they permitted Patel's States Ministry to assume the paramountcy over the states which had previously belonged to the Crown. It had been set forth as formal British policy in the Cabinet Mission's memorandum of 12 May 1946 that paramountcy would lapse upon the bestowal of independence, and this remained the British stance thereafter. The plan had been accepted by the Congress leaders 'with all its implications'.<sup>80</sup> And yet, there can be no doubt that within a few months of the transfer of power, Patel and Menon had succeeded in imposing the centre as a paramount power over the states.

They thus stand guilty of this charge, but having said that, it is necessary to add that the charge is founded upon a misconception, upon a charade. An analysis of this point will take us back to the heart of the whole problem of the princes' demise.

The treaties which provided the formal basis for British relations with the states linked the princes to the Crown and not to the Government of India. During the first four decades of this century, this formal distinction proved very useful to the British. For it was

during this period that they deliberately allowed the princes to pursue their autocratic ways in the states so that the rulers would remain a loyal counterweight to nationalism in the increasingly democratic provinces of British India. As long as the states were formally bound directly to the Crown, they could play their part directly in the maintenance of the raj no matter how powerful the nationalists became within the Government of India.

When it became clear that the time was approaching for their departure from India, the British found this direct link to the Crown to be an embarrassment. They had kept themselves in such a superior 'paramount' position that the princes with few exceptions were in a powerless and backward condition. Radical change was thus certain to come to the states and—since the vacuum created by the decampment of one paramount power was bound to be filled by another—it was certain to be imposed upon the states by the new government at the centre. The paradox of two different Indias existing side by side—one advancing towards electoral democracy and the other mired in personal autocracy—which the expediciencies of British policy had created—this paradox was clearly destined to pass away.

The British could see this coming, but because they had insisted for so long upon the sanctity of the princes' bonds to the Crown, they could not allow it to happen before the transfer of power without seeming to break the King's word. To prevent this happening, the Cabinet Mission plan asserted that paramountcy must lapse with British authority. This was to any realistic observer mere fiction, an obvious impossibility. But in order to spare the British embarrassment and to hasten the advent of swaraj, the Congress leaders agreed to participate in the charade. Hence, while it is true that in assuming paramountcy over the states, Patel and Menon were violating the terms of the transfer of power agreement, we must realize that that agreement was—in relation to princely India—a fig leaf to save the British from a very awkward situation. The Lothians and the Corfields refuse to see it as such. But that is only a measure of their inability to realize that long before 1947 princely India had become a hopeless anachronism, a British piece on a chessboard, to be sacrificed when the game was up. Patel and Menon deserve not the wrath of the British but rather their gratitude for allowing a graceful exit from an unhappy predicament.



## NOTES

1. Several works put forward the case of those who aided in the liquidation of the princes. Most important is V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, New Delhi, 1961. A. Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, Bombay, 1951, is highly sympathetic to the last Viceroy. The official case is put in Government of India, Ministry of States, *White Paper on Indian States*, New Delhi, 1950, especially chapter 5. See also M. Edwardes, *The Last Years of British India*, London, 1963, which is pro-nationalist on princely affairs, and C.C. Desai, 'My Work in the I.C.S.' in K.L. Panjabi, ed., *The Civil Servant in India*, Bombay, 1965, pp. 71-84. D. Das, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence: 1945-50*, Ahmedabad, 1971-4, III, V, VII, offer almost nothing new.

The case of those who sought to maintain princely rule is argued in a number of works. Sir Conrad Corfield's responses to questions in C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright, eds., *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935-47*, London, 1970, pp. 527-34, have been rendered obsolete by Corfield, *The Princely India I Knew: From Reading to Mountbatten*, Madras, 1975. Conversely, Sir Arthur Lothian's book, *Kingdoms of Yesterday*, London, 1951, contains less substance than his 'The Last Phase of the Indian States', *Quarterly Review*, April 1952, pp. 164-75; 'A Neglected Aspect of Recent Indian History', *Quarterly Review*, October 1962, pp. 392-402; and 'The Passing of the Indian States', *Quarterly Review*, January 1952, pp. 1-16. Also of importance is his review of V.P. Menon, *Integration*, in *Royal Central Asian Society Journal*, XLIV, 1, 1957, pp. 58-62. A very fair analysis is to be had in T.C. Coen, *The Indian Political Service: A Study in Indirect Rule*, London, 1971. See also Sir Edward Wakefield, *Past Imperative: My Life in India, 1927-47*, London, 1966; Sir Kenneth Fitze, *Twilight of the Maharajas*, London, 1956; Sir Penderel Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, London, 1973, and Lord Trevelyan, *The India We Left*, London, 1972.

2. Despite his bias in favour of Mountbatten, H.V. Hodson qualifies as a reasonably neutral observer with *The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan*, London, 1968. See also E.W.R. Lumby, 'British Policy towards the Indian States, 1940-7' in Philips and Wainwright, *The Partition of India*, and U. Phadnis, *Towards the Integration of the Indian States, 1919-47*, London, 1968.
3. See Curzon's minute on 'sovereignty' and the Indian states, a copy of which may be found in R/1/29/2676, IOL. All manuscript sources cited in this essay are in the IOL.
4. This was accompanied by a clear reduction in interference in states' affairs. A copy of Minto's speech on this subject may be found in R/1/29/2676.
5. *Ibid.*
6. The intrusion upon the Hyderabad administration was one very notable exception, but it was accomplished after protracted and vociferous protests by the Resident over outrageous abuses in the state. See Tasker Papers, IOL.
7. 'Relations with Indian States: Note by the Political Department, India Office (for briefing Lord Wavell)', 26 July 1943, pp. 3-4, R/1/29/2676.
8. LP & S/13/1636.

9. See Ian Copland's discussion of these points elsewhere in this volume.
10. 'Relations with Indian States', p. 5.
11. R/2/file 564/box 55.
12. Ian Copland in this book, pp. 296-7.
13. R/1/29/1827.
14. See the reports on the response and comments thereon in L/P & S/13/993.
15. This is most tellingly illustrated by Political Department reactions to a decision by the cabinet in 1943 in London unilaterally to strip the traditional rulers of Malaya of their power after the war. The treaty relationship between the Crown and the Malay rulers differed little in essence from that which linked the Crown and the Indian states. But political officers chose to see such differences because to have done otherwise might have led them to part with the *laissez-faire* policies which they had pursued for so long. Note by P.J. Patrick, L/P & S/13/981.
16. The choice of 565 for the total number of states is itself open to dispute because in a number of cases it is unclear whether units are feudatories of the Crown or of other states. It is, however, the figure most commonly used. The number of states which fell within the 'smaller states' category varied from 420 to well over 500, and the population contained therein varied from one-fifth to nearly one-third of the population of princely India. See unsigned note on states, n.d., code no. P.Y. 1397/40 in L/P & S/13/971 and notes on discussion at the India Office, 19 April 1945 in L/P & S/13/981.
17. Note by P.J. Patrick, 4 October 1939 and Linlithgow to Zetland, 28 July 1939, L/P & S/13/971.
18. Extract from record of Linlithgow's talks with Deccan States' rulers, December 1938, L/P & S/13/971.
19. Internal India Office note, anonymous, n.d. coded P.Y. 139/40 in L/P & S/13/971.
20. For another example, see telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 25 August 1942, L/P & S/13/971.
21. Circular to all Agency Residents from C.G. Herbert, 24 January 1939, L/P & S/13/971.
22. See for example, the extract from the fortnightly report on the Central India Agency, first half of June 1939; P.J. Patrick to C.G. Herbert, 5 March 1940 and Patrick to Herbert, 8 May 1940, L/P & S/13/971.
23. See for example, Corfield to Bradshaw, 31 March 1939, L/P & S/13/971.
24. Note by P.J. Patrick, 31 July 1939; India Office note by illegible, 16 January 1940 and note by Patrick, 5 March 1940, L/P & S/13/971.
25. See for example, note by Patrick, 31 July 1939 and Skrine to Glancy, 12 January 1940, L/P & S/13/971.
26. More precisely, it was the *Internal* section of the Political Department which handled problems other than those which developed along and just beyond India's borders. For a fuller discussion, see Coen, *Political Service*.
27. Zetland to Linlithgow, 16/19 October 1939 and anonymous note on states, coded P.Y. 1397/40, L/P & S/13/971. See also Copland's chapter in this book.
28. See for example, minute by Clauson, 26 August 1942, and note by C. Latimer, 29 September 1942, L/P & S/13/971. Also Corfield's complaints about over-work, *Princely India I Knew*, p. 143.

29. Interview with D.G. Harrington-Hawes, London, 3 June 1975, former Political Department officer.
30. See for example, F.F. Turnbull, 7 July 1941, L/P & S/13/971.
31. This point is substantiated by Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, p. 92.
32. Note by B. Glancy, 14 July 1939, L/P & S/13/971. In the same file, see Patrick's note, 27 June 1939.
33. Note by Patrick, 31 July 1939, L/P & S/13/971.
34. See for example, note by Glancy, c. 24 May 1939; Patrick to Latimer, 6 June 1939; minute by Clauson, 26 August 1942, L/P & S/13/971.
35. Fitze to Glancy, 6 May 1939, L/P & S/13/971.
36. See the comments on reports in L/P & S/13/993. This impression is reinforced by my interview with Mr Harrington-Hawes (note 29).
37. Telegram, Linlithgow to Amery, 11 December 1943, L/P & S/13/981.
38. Telegram, Wavell to Amery, 11 December 1943, *ibid*.
39. Telegram, Wavell to Amery, 28 November 1944, *ibid*.
40. Notes on India Office discussion, 19 April 1945, *ibid*.
41. J. Manor, 'Princely Mysore before the Storm: The State-Level Political System of India's "Model State"', *Modern Asian Studies*, IX, 1, February 1975, pp. 31-58.
42. J. Manor, 'Gandhian Politics and the Challenge to Princely Authority in Mysore, 1936-47', in D.A. Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-1947*, London, 1977, pp. 405-29.
43. See for example, telegram, Amery to Linlithgow, 10 June 1942, MSS. Eur. F. 125/11, and internal note by Fitze, 9 November 1945, L/P & S/13/1827.
44. During the early 1940s, it was occasionally suggested that the princes might form a union of states, separate from an independent India consisting of former provinces. But on each occasion, serious analysis quickly revealed this notion to be completely unrealistic. Worse still, it was dangerous to British interests since the Crown's past assurances to the princes might involve it in serious conflict with the new India. Consequently, the British discouraged this scheme as anything more than a princely bargaining counter. Telegrams, Linlithgow to Amery, 25 August 1942, MSS. Eur. F. 125/29; Amery to Linlithgow, 16 August 1942 and War Cabinet paper WP (42) 391, 4 September 1942, both in L/P & S/13/998.  
 When they allowed themselves to imagine princely states surviving the end of paramountcy, the British voiced hopes that their investments would be more welcome there than in the former provinces. See for example, the passing reference to this in telegram, Linlithgow to Amery, 12 May 1943, MSS. Eur. F. 125/11. And there were also suggestions, usually in the press, that princely territories could provide land for British military bases, a notion which P.J. Patrick of the India Office described as 'a little fanciful'. Note on Reuter wire, 9 April 1947, L/P & S/13/1827. Neither idea was given serious consideration because princely survival seemed a great deal to hope for. See telegram, Pethwick-Lawrence to Wavell, 7 November 1945, and memo to ministers, 'Policy on Indian States', 13 February 1946, both in L/P & S/13/1827.
45. See for example, telegrams, Amery to Linlithgow, 10 June 1942, MSS. Eur. F. 125/11 and Fitze to Patrick, 25 June 1942, L/P & S/13/230. These discussions grew out of an appeal for clarification of British policy in the letter of the

Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes to Sir H. Craik, 1 June 1942, L/P & S/13/230.

46. The quotations are drawn from telegram, Amery to Linlithgow, 16 August 1942, L/P & S/13/998. See also War Cabinet paper WP(42)391, 4 September 1942, L/P & S/13/998. And Political Adviser, Government of India, to Rajputana Resident, Mysore Residency Notes for August 1941; Political Adviser to Crown Representative, 7 September 1943; Political Adviser to Philip Gaisford, 7 December 1945, and Political Adviser to Gaisford, 8 August 1946, all in R/2/file 49/serial 565/box 55. See also extracts from minutes of India Committee, 11 September 1945; and Pethwick-Lawrence to Wavell, 14 March 1947, L/P & S/13/1827.
47. The quotations are drawn respectively from telegram, Linlithgow to Amery, 25 September 1942, MSS. Eur. F. 125/23, and Linlithgow's speech, 13 March 1939, MSS. Eur. F. 125/29.
48. See for example, telegram, Linlithgow to Amery, 25 August 1942, *ibid.*
49. There are, for example, distinct signs of this in the comments on periodic reports on 'Constitutional and Administrative Reforms' in the states in L/P & S/13/993.
50. The discussion which follows is intended to refer mainly to states other than Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir. This is not to say that the discussion is irrelevant to these three states, but only that they pose such complex problems that they cannot be dealt with adequately here.
51. Quoted in Coen, *Indian Political Service*, p. 125.
52. Hodson, *Great Divide*, p. 363. Corfield appears to misquote this as 'malfeasance' which in legal terms is a much less precise charge. Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, p. 156.
53. Hodson, *Great Divide*, p. 359.
54. Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, pp. 151-3.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Hodson, *Great Divide*, p. 359.
57. Lothian, 'Last Phase', p. 171.
58. Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, pp. 151-9.
59. Menon, *Integration*, pp. 77, 83, 86-7.
60. Interview, Harrington-Hawes.
61. See for example, Lothian, 'Last Phase', p. 166; Lothian review of Menon, pp. 59-61; Coen, *Indian Political Service*, pp. 135-7; Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, pp. 158-9 and Fitze, *Twilight*, pp. 160-2.
62. Ministry of States, *White Paper*, especially chapter 5. Menon, for example, gives the impression that the Maharaja of Mysore graciously gave way to popular sovereignty when in fact the Mysore Congress had to wage a six-week satyagraha which involved severe dislocation before the ruler would yield. Menon cannot have been ignorant of this. He spent much of his life in Mysore and knew it well. Menon, *Integration*, chapter 15.
63. Menon, *Integration*, chapter 5.
64. C.C. Desai, 'My Work', pp. 78-9.
65. Hodson, *Great Divide*, pp. 494-9, especially p. 499n.
66. Interview with Major-General and Mrs D.C. Misra, son-in-law and daughter of V.P. Menon, Bangalore, 24 October 1972.



67. Menon, *Integration*, chapter 5.
68. See for example, Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, p. 158.
69. Lothian review of Menon, p. 60.
70. Wakefield, *Past Imperative*, p. 218.
71. See Mountbatten to Maharaj-Rana of Dholpur, 29 July 1947, in Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, pp. 183–5.
72. Ibid., p. 184 and Coen, *Indian Political Service*, p. 127.
73. Hodson, *Great Divide*, pp. 366–7. The three subjects on which the states would yield were derived from the Cabinet Mission Memorandum, 12 May 1946.
74. Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, p. 184.
75. Menon, *Integration*, pp. 166–7. See also Campbell-Johnson, *Mission*, pp. 38, 89–90, 119 and Hodson, *Great Divide*, pp. 364–5, 369.
76. Interview with H.V. Hodson, Oxford, 12 March 1972. Curiously, Sir Conrad Corfield himself concedes that Mountbatten had insufficient time to formulate a systematic policy towards the states. *Princely India I Knew*, p. 152. This surely makes it more difficult for him to cast Mountbatten as a villain of the piece.
77. See for example, Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, pp. 158–9. The quotation is from the note on p. 158.
78. Quoted in Coen, *Indian Political Service*, p. 124.
79. Lothian, 'Last Phase', pp. 169–70; Lothian review of Menon, pp. 58–9 and Corfield, *Princely India I Knew*, p. 156.
80. Nehru, quoted in Coen, *Indian Political Service*, p. 127.

# 10

## Traditional Rulers in Post-Traditional Societies: The Princes of India and Pakistan

WILLIAM L. RICHTER

Independence and the ensuing integration of the princely states into India and Pakistan radically changed the two-fifths of the subcontinent which had been princely India. Princes were removed from their thrones, most of their states were absorbed into larger political entities, and new political pressures and policies brought about other far-reaching changes in the social structure of what had been princely India.

In many respects, however, the changes following independence in 1947 have not been nearly as radical as is generally pictured to be the case. While the initial processes of integration moved rather rapidly in India under the forceful leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and V.P. Menon, similar events moved more slowly in Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> More notably, as the Indian States Reorganization Commission later remarked, the merging of the two Indias was not fully completed in either country with the legal termination of princely rule.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent provincial boundary changes in both India and Pakistan have continued to modify and undermine older political identities, but regional loyalties based upon earlier princely state boundaries have been remarkably persistent.

Though merger brought to many princely areas their first experience with competitive political parties and democratic elections, it would be erroneous to regard the princely states as 'devoid of politics' prior to 1947. Some, indeed, had instituted elections and semi-representative institutions much earlier. More importantly, groups and individuals who vied for position, power, and privilege under the old order have continued to participate within the new system. In many states the Praja Mandals—units of the states' people's movement—were transformed at independence into local unus

of the Congress Party. In similar fashion, former princely state officials have often found important roles to play in the post-princely era.

Most notably, the princes themselves have remained prominent features of the political and social life of independent India and Pakistan. Their privy purses and special privileges were maintained in both countries until late 1971—nearly a quarter-century after the formal 'demise' of princely India. While some withdrew from public life, it is certainly incorrect to suggest that they all 'were pensioned off, and retired into their make-believe world of hunting and other pursuits'.<sup>3</sup> Rather, many have filled important and sometimes leading political positions in both countries.

To refer to the Indian and Pakistani princes as 'traditional rulers' is perhaps as misleading as to call India and Pakistan 'post-traditional societies'.<sup>4</sup> But both phrases point to an important fact: despite the continuities we have observed, the political environment *has* changed and those princes who have been politically active after 1947 have had to respond to changed and changing circumstances. Following the British departure from the subcontinent, the princes were left without the protection and support they had previously received from an alien and colonial power. They had to adjust to a nationalistic and democratic environment dominated by indigenous politicians. How they did so depended not only upon such personal factors as each ruler's age, health, and value preferences, but also upon regional political configurations, resources, and other factors.

In order to make some sense out of the complex political role of the princes in independent India and Pakistan, it is helpful first to review the relevant changes in their environment, then to look more directly at the characteristics of the princely politicians.

### *The Integration of the Princely States*

Accounts of the processes by which the Indian and Pakistani states were integrated have been provided in detail elsewhere and may be summarized more briefly here. Minimal provisions were made by the departing British for procedures by which the states would be brought into line with the newly independent dominions. By the date of independence, 14/15 August 1947, all but three of the states which became a part of India had signed the appropriate instruments of accession. All three of the recalcitrant

states—Junagadh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Hyderabad—were later pressured into integration in ways which embittered Indo-Pakistani relations.

None of the Pakistani states had acceded by independence. In fact, all of the processes of integration moved more slowly in Pakistan than in India. In part this resulted from Pakistan's much weaker position at the time of independence, from promises that Mohammad Ali Jinnah had made to entice rulers into joining with Pakistan instead of India, and from the greater physical isolation of most of the Pakistani states. Nonetheless, all ten of the states in Pakistan acceded by mid-1948. The most troublesome of these was Kalat, the largest of the four Baluchi states. Like the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Khan of Kalat attempted to remain independent. Only an extended period of negotiation, the mobilization of the Pakistani army, and the accession of the other three Baluchi states brought about Kalat's compliance and accession.<sup>5</sup>

Both India and Pakistan proceeded with the territorial integration of their states in a multistage and varied fashion. In India many of the smaller states were merged with surrounding provinces such as Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, and Bombay. Where this was not possible, groups of states were joined together in 'state unions'. Under yet a third arrangement, the larger states and a few of the smaller ones were allowed to retain for some time their separate identities. (See Table 1.) In Pakistan, the two Indus valley states, Bahawalpur and Khairpur, continued as separate entities, as did the four frontier states of Chitral, Amb, Dir, and Swat. The four Baluchi states—Kalat, Makran, Kharan, and Las Bela—were, however, merged into a Baluchistan States Union in 1954 and subsequently united with the formerly British-ruled province of Baluchistan.

Territorial reorganization in Pakistan in 1955 and in India in 1956 eliminated several of the states as identifiable units and reduced the status of many of the princes. In Pakistan, all of the previously separate provinces of West Pakistan were merged into a single unit. Bahawalpur, Khairpur, and Baluchistan thus lost their separate identities, but the frontier states were exempted from the one-unit 'scheme' and their rulers continued to exercise near-complete internal authority and autonomy. In India, the reorganization of state boundaries along linguistic lines in 1956 effected the disappearance of a separate Hyderabad and the merger of Mysore



and the state unions of Travancore-Cochin, Saurashtra, Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh, and PEPSU (the Patiala and East Punjab States Union) with surrounding territories which had been British-ruled before 1947. Several of the more important of the former rulers, who until this time had been given positions of constitutional authority (Rajpramukhs, Uprajpramukhs, etc.) within their former states or state unions, were relieved of these responsibilities. Only in the four frontier states of Pakistan did hereditary rulers continue to rule after 1956, not counting of course the Maharajas of Sikkim and Bhutan. The frontier states of Chitral, Dir, and Swat were finally absorbed by Pakistan in July 1969 under the martial law regime of General Yahya Khan.<sup>6</sup>

The Himalayan states of Sikkim and Bhutan had been treated by the British in the same manner as the other princely states. Both were viewed, however, as somewhat marginal by the Indians who succeeded to British paramountcy, both because of their geographical location and their ethnic and economic ties to Tibet. In the years immediately following independence, therefore, the Indian States Ministry did not press these two states into accession and merger but rather signed treaties with them in 1949, giving India control over Bhutan's foreign affairs, and in 1950, defining Sikkim as a protectorate of India.<sup>7</sup> Both were thus left in a state of semi-independence, though Bhutan was regarded as being somewhat more autonomous than Sikkim.<sup>8</sup> Subsequent events have further widened the distinction between the two. Bhutan's late ruler, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, provided his state with a democratic constitution, and, with Indian sponsorship, obtained membership in the United Nations. Sikkim, on the other hand, moved in the opposite direction. In March 1973, ethnic conflict erupted between the Nepali majority in the state and the dominant Bhotia community to which the Maharaja, Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal, belongs. The Government of India sent troops to restore order, appointed an Indian civil servant to administer the state, sponsored negotiations whereby the Chogyal agreed to a new constitution and a more representative assembly, and oversaw elections to the assembly. The elections were won by the Sikkim National Congress, a predominantly Nepali party. In the summer of 1974, the Sikkim assembly requested, and the Indian parliament agreed to permit, two non-voting representatives of Sikkim to take seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian parliament. Subsequently, the

state was granted full statehood within the Indian union, and the Chogyal was removed from power.

The former rulers of the Indian princely states have either gone through or are in the process of going through a series of at least four stages of integration, each of them constituting, on the whole, a form of downward mobility for the ruler and his family: accession, merger, the end of guaranteed political status (such as that still enjoyed by the Sultans of Malaysia), and abolition of privileges and privy purses. The time schedules by which these changes have occurred have differed radically throughout South Asia. For many princes, two or more stages occurred at a single step.

The political vestiges of India's princely state heritage are numerous and are generally given short shrift by contemporary social scientists and historians. One such vestige is the persistence of regional loyalties and identities based upon earlier princely state boundaries. The most prominent recent example is in Andhra Pradesh, where the Telengana region (formerly a part of the princely state of Hyderabad) and the Andhra region (formerly included within Madras province) have intermittently sought separation from one another for the last several years.<sup>9</sup> The princely state heritage is particularly pertinent to the Telengana agitation, where a major point at issue was the Mulki Rules, directives issued by the former Nizam of Hyderabad to protect the employment of local residents. Karen Leonard's chapter in this book deals with the question in detail. Similarly, though less intense or prominent, historically-based conflicts have characterized Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, and the Saurashtra region of Gujarat.<sup>10</sup> In Pakistan similar regional identities are exemplified by the movement to re-establish Bahawalpur as a separate unit within the Pakistan federal system.<sup>11</sup>

A second result of the 'two Indias heritage' is the differing levels of political development and behaviour to be found within India and Pakistan. Oft-mentioned differences in economic development between princely and non-princely India have frequently been overstated and many of the economic differences between princely and British India are not fully attributable to princely rule.<sup>12</sup> However, the relative lack of political experience of the subjects of most of the princely states of South Asia has been reflected in the post-independence period in lower levels of voter participation, higher levels of invalid voting, and quite diverse patterns of party

institutionalization.<sup>13</sup>

The final vestige of India's princely state heritage which merits attention is the political activity of a large group of former rulers in independent India and Pakistan. That many have had administrative training and experience prior to 1947 is no doubt one asset. Another is the traditional loyalty of former subjects which several rulers have been able to convert into political support. For consideration of possible causes and consequences of their political activity, it is necessary to look at the princes themselves.

### *Princely Politicians*

The princes responded in a variety of ways to the challenges which Indian and Pakistani independence brought them. Some, like Maharaja Yadavindar Singh of Patiala or young Brijinder Singh, Raja of Ranpur, saw opportunity in throwing in their lot with independent India. Others resisted to the point of armed conflict. Several rulers in Saurashtra reportedly supported dacoits (outlaws) against the popular government. In Pakistan, armed revolt by the tribal supporters of the Khan of Kalat was one factor precipitating declaration of martial law in 1958.

Freed of most of their ceremonial and administrative responsibilities, the princes also turned to several different occupations. Many retired from public life. Some turned to business, and many others to management of the private lands they had been able to retain. Many others, however, found places in the new regime. Some of the dozen or so who became Rajpramukhs or Uprajpramukhs until 1956 later continued in government service. The Jam Saheb of Nawanagar served as India's representative to the United Nations and as Governor of Madras following his service as Rajpramukh of Saurashtra. Similarly, the Maharaja of Mysore served a term as Governor of Mysore state, then another as Governor of Madras state before retiring from public life. Maharaja Karan Singh of Jammu and Kashmir served until 1967 as Sadar-i-Riyasat (head of state) of Jammu and Kashmir under a special provision that allowed for his election by that state's legislative assembly. In 1967, he was elected to the Lok Sabha and joined Mrs Gandhi's cabinet, first as Minister for Aviation and Tourism and later as Health Minister. Several other former princes joined the Indian Foreign Service, the Indian Administrative Service, or took regular commissions in the military.

The most prominent ex-rulers have been those who have entered politics. Of the 284 Indian princely families which were guaranteed privy purses and privileges at the time of the merger of their states, more than one-third have fielded candidates for legislative assembly or Lok Sabha seats—a total of more than 150 princely politicians. Most of these individuals were elected one or more times and several have held state or national office within the government or within their respective political parties. Several have served as state ministers, two as state chief ministers, at least two others as state assembly opposition leaders, and at least two as members of the central cabinet. Still others have served in the Rajya Sabha. At lower levels and in less public ways, princes and their relatives have worked on political campaigns, endorsed candidates, contributed money or jeeps or manpower to campaigns, contacted government officials for redress of grievances, and served within local government bodies. Among the smaller number of Pakistani princes, at least three former rulers have similarly been provincial governor or chief minister.

Most of the discussion which follows will concentrate primarily upon the princely parliamentary and assembly candidates in India, where adequate data are available on the 284 privy purse families to provide some basis for analysis and generalization. Candidacy in elections is perhaps the most open and vulnerable form of political participation. Standing for office requires greater exposure and threatens more loss of dignity by former rulers than does more behind-the-scenes activity. Further, by observing princely candidates for public office, we are also able to observe voter behaviour as well, and thereby to assess the public response to princely political participation and the nature of public support for it.

### *Characteristics*

Who are the princely politicians and how are they to be distinguished from their apolitical brethren? While in one sense every individual case is unique, there are a few common factors which appear to be important. The first of these is *region*. In some parts of India, such as Orissa or the Chhattisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh, more than half of the princely families have had members stand for state or national elective office. (See Table 2.) In Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and the Madhya Bharat region of Madhya Pradesh, on the other hand, fewer than a fifth of the



princely families have fielded assembly or Lok Sabha candidates. Part of the explanation for this is to be found in the relative size of the states in these regions, a factor we shall consider presently. Another important consideration, however, has been the attitude of the provincial political leadership within these regions. The Chhattisgarhi princes, whose states were absorbed into Madhya Pradesh in 1948–9, were encouraged by the Madhya Pradesh chief minister, Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla, to enter active political life and ‘help make this democratic system a success’.<sup>14</sup> The Raja of Khairagarh, who had become India’s ambassador to Portugal following the merger of his state, was, along with his wife, persuaded by Shukla to stand for the legislative assembly in 1952. Upon their election, both were given cabinet posts and served in parliament and assembly for two decades afterwards. In Orissa (directly adjacent to Chhattisgarh) princely political participation has been encouraged both by this type of Congress Party exploitation of princely political appeal and by the existence of a strong regional party, the Ganatantra Parishad, later (after 1961) a state unit of the all-India Swatantra Party.<sup>15</sup>

A second major differentiating characteristic of the princely states was their *size* and *status*. As Tables 3 and 4 show, the participation rate of families from princely states which were over two hundred square miles in territory and over five thousand in population is much higher than of those from smaller states. This is really not so surprising, since the rulers of the smaller states were frequently little more than large landlords, whose resources in money and public support were relatively limited. In response to a questionnaire administered in 1970, Himachal Pradesh rulers whose former states totalled less than 350 square miles, gave remarkably similar answers to the question of why they had not participated in politics.

I have not had the time to enter the political field yet, as I have enough of my own work to look after [ruler in his thirties who is a farmer and businessman].

Didn’t get time [ruler in his fifties who is a farmer and who had been asked to stand for office by national and local Congress leaders].

I did not run for any office. I hardly get time from farming [ruler in his forties who is a farmer].

Following this assumption that resources are indeed important in determining which ruling families have become involved in politics, we should also find some difference between those who stand for Lok Sabha seats and those who stand for the legislative assembly. Lok Sabha constituencies are several times the size of legislative assembly constituencies, so it is both more costly to campaign for the parliamentary seat and less likely that a princely candidate's constituency will have been entirely within the confines of his former princely state. As Tables 5 and 6 indicate, the smaller states do tend to provide assembly candidates and larger states to provide Lok Sabha candidates.

A third measure of princely state prominence and prestige—*gun salutes*—shows similar patterns. One hundred and twenty of the Indian and Pakistani princely states were accorded salute rankings by the British, ranging from 9 guns for the least prestigious salute states to 21 guns for the most important. Roughly a quarter of the non-salute families have fielded candidates for office, while nearly half of the salute state families have done so. Strikingly, at least two of these three measures of princely state size and status suggest that the greatest level of political participation has not been among the very largest, most populous, or most prestigious states, but rather among what might be called the upper-middle-level families: those from states which had 17-gun salutes, and a population (in the 1931 census) of from half a million to a million. These are at a level where financial resources and reputations would be great enough to support a political career, while the countervailing attitude of aloofness, which affected some of the rulers of the very largest states, would be less in evidence to inhibit such activity.

*Religion, caste, and clan* are not particularly important in determining which princely families stand for office, but they have frequently been important in determining the nature of support for such princely candidates. All of the princely states which became a part of Pakistan were ruled by Muslims and around eighty or ninety per cent of those which became a part of India were ruled by Hindus. Of the 284 families which retained privy purses after 1948, 253 were Hindu, 25 Muslim, and 6 Sikh. More than two-thirds (181) of the Hindu families are Rajput by caste. All of the Sikh states and eight of the Hindu states were ruled by Jats, while some Maratha Brahmin families ruled elsewhere, and the rulers of a handful of

tribal states in central India were designated as 'Raj-Gond' (See Table 7).

Religion, caste, and clan affinities have been politically important in several ways. First, like other political candidates, Rajvanshis (members of princely families) may have a special electoral appeal for voters with whom they have such ties, and may be recruited to stand for office to exploit that appeal. The Nawab of Loharu, a small Muslim state on the Haryana-Rajasthan border, was persuaded by Rajasthan Congress leaders to contest a predominantly Muslim constituency in Jaipur in 1962. In the 1971 parliamentary elections, the Maharaja of Bharatpur, recognized as a ceremonial leader of the Jat community, campaigned with the Nawab of Pataudi, a Muslim ruler whose fame comes more from his exploits on the cricket field than from politics, in an (unsuccessful) attempt to get both elected to parliament by capturing Jat and Muslim votes. The Maharaja of Patiala, who was elected to the Punjab legislative assembly in 1967, benefited from his former position as the ruler of the leading Sikh state. Similar electoral benefits of primordial affinity have accrued to the Jodhpur family (head of the Rathor Rajputs), Jaipur (head of the Kachwaha clan), and others. Perhaps the most interesting and novel use of primordial electoral appeal is that of Nawab Iftikhar Ali Khan of Malerkotla who, though a Muslim, draws heavily and consistently upon Sikh support in his predominantly Sikh constituency (and former state). He accomplishes this in the following way: an ancestor of the Nawab is reported to have given protection to the son of an early Sikh leader against his threatened death at the hand of the Mughal Emperor. Building upon this base, the Nawab affects the life style of the Sikhs in notable ways. Though he is clean shaven, he wears a turban in the Sikh style. At one point in his career, he also joined the Akali Dal, a predominantly Sikh political party, thereby becoming the first non-Sikh member of that party in the state legislative assembly.

Like other politicians, many princes find family ties to be important politically as well as socially. Not surprisingly, many of those princes who are in politics are closely related to one another. While it is impossible here to go thoroughly into all of the genealogical relationships among politically active princes, it is helpful to note a few of the more interesting patterns. The most common are cases in which two or more immediate relatives are politically active.<sup>16</sup> (Table 8). Most of these relationships are easily explained as

the ruler recruiting his family members to assume public office in order to secure additional political power for himself. In some cases, the ruler runs his mother, son, brother, or daughter for one office while he stands for another. In other instances (many of which are not included in Table 8), the ruler may run his family members for office but decline to stand himself. In still other instances, marital ties have followed rather than preceded political ones. Such was the case with the former rulers of Dhenkanal and Kalahandi in Orissa. Their son and daughter, respectively, were married after the elder rulers had been associated for some time in the Eastern States Union, Ganatantra Parishad, and other political endeavours.

Family ties among politically active princes are not necessarily cordial. In the Muslim state of Rampur, for instance, Zulfikar Ali Khan, a brother of the Nawab and a member of parliament, ran his mother as a candidate against his brother (the Nawab) in the 1969 mid-term assembly elections. In the 1971 parliamentary elections, the junior and senior Begums of Bhopal split their support between opposing candidates. In such instances palace politics have become public.

Once one goes beyond the immediate family it is possible to link numerous politically active princes together genealogically. Only one such family need be mentioned, however, since it demonstrates yet another way in which family ties may influence political participation. Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda ruled from 1875 to 1939 and brought about extensive social and economic changes during his reign, as David Hardiman's chapter in this book makes clear.<sup>17</sup> Strikingly, at least five of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren have become involved in state or national politics.<sup>18</sup> Three of the five were educated in Baroda state during the reign of Sayajirao. In this instance, the princely politicians related to one another appear not to have had much influence on each other's political careers, but they all appear to have been socialized to a certain progressive, participant, adaptive political orientation.

### *Recruitment and Partisanship*

Publicity concerning the Indian princes has tended to give the impression that those who enter politics have done so largely for personal or political gain and that their efforts have largely been directed against the ruling Congress Party. An investigation of the recruitment pattern of princely politicians reveals, however, a quite



different picture. Very few of the princes entered politics entirely of their own volition. There are a few instances in which politically ambitious rulers stood for office, were elected, and then negotiated themselves positions within one or another political party. By far the more common pattern, however, has been that in which a party politician has recognized in the prince or a member of his family a potential vote-bank and has persuaded the Rajvanshi to be the party's candidate. Moreover, it is the Congress Party which has been most adept at this form of exploitation of the popular appeal of the princes. Approximately half of the politically active princes in India have been at one time or another members of the Congress Party. Most of these were drawn into political activity by state or national Congress leaders. In some instances, such as that of the late Raja of Nalagarh in PEPSU (later a part of Punjab) or Raja Lalit Sen of Suket in Himachal Pradesh, princely candidates were imposed upon the state's leadership by the Prime Minister or other national leaders.

The case of Rajmata Vijaye Raje Scindia of Gwalior is particularly illustrative of both this method of recruitment and changes which occurred to it in the late 1960s. While her husband, Maharaja Jivaji Rao Scindia, was still Rajpramukh of the state of Madhya Bharat, Vijaye Raje was asked by two or three members of the central cabinet to stand for parliament. Despite her initial reluctance, she was persuaded by her husband that this would be appropriate. She was elected in 1957 and again in 1962, but showed little interest in her parliamentary position. Her vote was available whenever the Congress Party needed it, but she otherwise took little part in parliamentary proceedings. In 1966, however, she received a second impetus to enter public life, this one more emotionally compelling. Two actions by the Congress chief minister of Madhya Pradesh (into which Madhya Bharat had been merged in 1956) angered the Rajmata and caused her not only to leave the Congress Party but to organize an opposition against it. In the 1967 election, she was elected to parliament on the Swatantra Party ticket and to the state legislative assembly with the Jana Sangh Party label. She retained the assembly seat and put together a non-Congress coalition which ruled the state for nearly two years. She and her Oxford-educated son, Maharaja Madhav Rao Scindia, later joined the Jana Sangh.

In the 1967 and 1971 elections, several princes did leave the

Congress Party. In 1967 this was related to a general breakdown in that party's ability to resolve internal conflicts and maintain the grand coalition it had enjoyed since independence. The 1971 gathering of princes in the opposition reflected the prominence of the privy purse abolition issue. The 1971 parliamentary elections were in a sense a referendum on the abolition of privy purses and princely privileges. Mrs Gandhi dissolved the Lok Sabha a year earlier than its full term after the Supreme Court of India declared her previous derecognition of princes to be unconstitutional. Consequently, only those princes who agreed with the abolition policy, such as Maharaja Karan Singh of Jammu and Kashmir, remained firmly attached to the Congress Party. However, after Congress won those elections and carried through with the termination of princely privileges in December 1971, several old ties between Congress and the princes were re-established in time for the state assembly elections in early 1972. Many princes still see Congress as the only national party in India.

Most of the princely politicians not in Congress are either independents or members of parties to the right of Congress, most notably Swatantra and Jana Sangh. Quite a few were also prominent in the early 1950s as candidates of the Ram Rajya Parishad, a Hindu-based party advocating a return to 'the Rule of God' (Ram Rajya). Surprisingly little has been written about the Ram Rajya Parishad which largely faded from existence in Indian politics after the 1957 general election. Most accounts simply refer to it as a 'communal' party.<sup>19</sup>

Though information on the Pakistani princes is not so readily available, they also enjoyed close relations with nationalist leaders. Mohammad Ali Jinnah was reportedly even friendlier to the Pakistani princes than Nehru was to those in India.<sup>20</sup> Such ties between the princes and the ruling elite did not end with the coming of martial law in 1958. Though an armed revolt by the Khan of Kalat was the ostensible reason for the declaration of martial law, President Ayub Khan later resumed the deferential treatment of the landed aristocracy, including the restoration of the Khan of Kalat to power in 1962. Non-political in nature, but certainly pertinent to the point at hand is the fact that Ayub's younger daughter, Jameela, married the brother of the Wali of Swat in May 1962.<sup>21</sup> Despite the populist pronouncements of his Pakistan People's Party and his moves to derecognize the princes and absorb their former

states, Bhutto also made some adjustments in his naming of the Amir of Bahawalpur as governor of Punjab, the Khan of Kalat as governor of Baluchistan and the Jam of Las Bela as its chief minister.<sup>22</sup>

### *Performance and Impact*

How well have princely politicians performed in elections and what has been their impact upon the Indian voter? These questions are explored in greater detail elsewhere, though we may summarize a few tentative answers here.<sup>23</sup> First of all, princely candidates have generally been good electoral assets for their parties. A majority of princely candidates standing in each election have been elected and in some elections the proportion has been as high as 70 or 80 per cent. Princely candidates, on the average, run around 20 percentage points ahead of other winning candidates. Princely candidates also usually run well ahead of their party (taking the state average as a norm) and those who stand for parliamentary seats are often able to secure the election of fellow party members to the assembly seats within their parliamentary constituency.<sup>24</sup>

Some princes have a 'portable' support base which they can carry from party to party with impunity. Others appear to be heavily dependent upon their political party. The most notable examples perhaps are the Rajas of Bastar (Madhya Pradesh) and Ranpur (Orissa), each of whom was elected to the state legislative assembly on a Congress Party ticket, then defected from the Congress Party, and in the subsequent election dropped from first place to fifth place in their constituencies. Support for princely candidates is not automatic and there appears to be something of a slow but progressive decline in their levels of support. However, it should not be assumed that princely political support is merely a function of backwardness, superstition, and ignorance. The constituencies in which princes are elected are not any more economically or politically backward than other surrounding constituencies. One prince, formerly a member of parliament, noted that the level of literacy in his constituency was higher than that in the constituency of the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi.<sup>25</sup> Within their constituencies, princes tend to draw more support from the urban than the rural areas and from the economically better-off rather than the backward areas.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the impact of princely political candidacy upon voters' behaviour is the higher turnout

which princes manage to elicit when they stand as candidates. Former princely state areas tend generally to have lower levels of voter turnout than areas which were formerly a part of British India, as a result of the longer period of political experience of the former British provinces. Constituencies in which princes stand, however, have significantly higher levels of voter participation.<sup>26</sup> In order to make certain that princes were not simply standing in high turnout constituencies, I looked at several constituencies, comparing earlier elections in which no princely candidate was present with later ones in which princes competed. The mean increase in such constituencies was markedly higher than one finds elsewhere in the same states. Interestingly enough, such increases in voter participation elicited by princely political candidacy do not appear to be lost when the princely candidates stopped running for office. A second comparison of pairs of elections in constituencies where princes were candidates in the earlier elections and not present in the later ones showed very little decline in voter participation. In summary, princes have not only served in a wide range of public positions in independent India, but have also contributed to the building of political parties and to the socialization of the Indian electorate to a relatively new and increasingly pervasive democratic participatory electoral system.

### *'Derecognition'*

We may now attempt something of an assessment of the causes and consequences of the termination of the special income and privileges of Indian and Pakistani princes in December 1971. It may seem to many that the question which should be asked is why these 'anachronistic' vestiges of feudal privilege should have been preserved so long after national independence. The foregoing discussion of the political role of princes in the last quarter century has provided one sort of answer to this question: national political leaders from Nehru to Shastri to Indira Gandhi and from Jinnah to Ayub to Bhutto have treated the princes more as friends and associates than as implacable class enemies and have frequently found princely political support to be valuable for stability, progress, or partisan gain. A more fundamental reason for the preservation of such arrangements is that such was the price of the essentially bloodless revolution by which the princely states became a part of India and Pakistan. In India, the agreements reached



through negotiations over accession and merger of the states were expressly guaranteed by provisions in the 1950 constitution. In Pakistan, the promises made by Jinnah to secure the accession of the princely states seemed even more binding upon a newly independent country whose resources were sorely taxed by other pressing demands.

This being the case, it is then necessary to ask the opposite question: why were the privileges and income which were guaranteed to the princes in perpetuity terminated at all? And why did the two countries of India and Pakistan, whose previous experience with the princes had been in many ways quite divergent, choose almost the same time to abolish princely privileges? In both countries the answers to the first of these questions lie more in crises suffered by the political system than in the behaviour of the princes or in any of the legal arguments surrounding the cases. Despite the fact that the Indian and Pakistani rulers were shorn of their status within days of one another, they arrived at that point by quite different processes which have been mentioned but may be reviewed at greater length here.

The demand for the abolition of privy purses in India grew out of the electoral defeats suffered by the Congress Party in the fourth general elections in 1967. Following the elections, in June 1967, Congress strategists met and decided that the party's image had become tarnished and needed to be rejuvenated by an infusion of socialist ideology and programme. A ten-point programme was drawn up which included the abolition of some of the special privileges enjoyed by the princes but did not originally touch upon their privy purse income. A subsequent meeting, however, expanded the scope of this proposal to include the princes' pensions as well. In response, a group of princes formed in August 1967 an organization called the Consultation of Rulers of Indian States in Concord for India. One of the major and most immediate purposes of the consultation was to lobby against the governmental threat to the princes' status and income.<sup>27</sup> The government and the princes' representatives carried on intermittent negotiations for more than three years. Eventually the government introduced in parliament a long-heralded constitutional amendment bill for the ending of special princely status. Somewhat surprisingly, the bill was defeated in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian parliament, by a mere fraction of a vote. In quick response, acting on the advice of

the Prime Minister, President V.V. Giri withdrew recognition from all of the princes by presidential order. Eight former rulers took the matter to court and in mid-December 1970, were rewarded with a Supreme Court declaration that the President had acted unconstitutionally and had exceeded his power. It was at this point that Mrs Gandhi, again with very little hesitation, dissolved parliament and called for fresh elections. Campaigning on her defence of the little man against entrenched privilege, her record of having nationalized several major banks and on the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' (abolish poverty), Mrs Gandhi's party secured an impressive majority in the 1971 elections. She did not immediately return to the princes issue, however, as the country was almost immediately afterward taken up with the Pakistani civil war in Bangladesh and the flood of Bengali refugees into India. India entered the war in December 1971 and swiftly moved to a decisive victory. In the wake of such performance and in the closing days of the winter session of parliament, the constitutional amendment bill was reintroduced and swiftly passed by both houses of parliament without difficulty, thereby removing from the constitution all mention of princely privilege.

In contrast to this protracted and often retrograde movement in India, the action of the Government of Pakistan against its princes was less public but much swifter and more summary in nature. In March 1969, President Ayub Khan was forced to declare martial law and place the government in the hands of General A.M. Yahya Khan. On 28 July 1969, President Yahya Khan announced in a broadcast to the nation the arrangements whereby he would return Pakistan to a parliamentary system with direct representation based upon the principle of one-man one-vote. In the course of his speech, he also announced in a very brief paragraph that his administration had 'decided that the time has come to merge the states of Chitral, Dir, and Swat in West Pakistan'.<sup>28</sup>

The elections promised in Yahya's speech of mid-1969 were held on 7 December 1970, but the constituent assembly which was to meet afterwards never convened because of differences between East Pakistani and West Pakistani leaders, culminating eventually in full-scale civil war. After Pakistan suffered defeat at the hands of the Indian army in December, General Yahya Khan turned the government over to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, whose Pakistan People's Party had secured a healthy majority of West Pakistani seats in the elections held a year earlier. Bhutto took over the Government of

Pakistan on 20 December. He immediately seized the passports of the members of the top twenty-two families who had come increasingly to dominate Pakistan's economic life. (None of these were princely families.) Then on 23 December, he ordered that privy purses, privileges, and titles of all the rulers of acceding and merged states be abolished.<sup>29</sup> Like Yahya Khan before him and Mrs Gandhi in India, Bhutto sacrificed earlier arrangements with the princes to wider political objectives. He took charge of Pakistan at a particularly precarious time and made a series of dramatic moves such as this to build political capital. Unlike Mrs Gandhi, Bhutto and Yahya Khan could act without the incumbrance of a parliament, a princely lobby, or even a constitution.

In both India and Pakistan, it was the temporary weakness rather than the overwhelming strength of the national leadership which led to the formal end of the princely order.

### *After the Fall*

How has 'derecognition' changed the role of the princes in India and Pakistan? The immediate effect, at least for a large number of the smaller state rulers in India, has been economic hardship. The government earlier promised to provide transitional payments to ease the blow to less wealthy princes, but legal difficulties and some expression of public opinion against such arrangements created extensive delays. The controversy surrounding privy purses has brought some damage to the prestige and status of princely politicians.

On the other hand, much remains unchanged. Congress recruitment of princely candidates for the 1972 assembly elections and the continued performance and prominence of princely politicians both in India and Pakistan suggest that the last chapter has not yet been written on princely politics. The princely order still contains a large number of talented individuals with potentially valuable training, education, and skills. Though titles have been abolished, they are still quite widely used informally and most of the princes and their families are still accorded respect, deference, and—if need be—political support by their former subjects.

In summary, the princes appear destined to remain important in the public life of India and Pakistan. Though this may be on a reduced scale, particularly in India, some factors may actually work to *increase* princely political participation. In Pakistan particularly,

the recent merger of the frontier states means at least the beginning of a transformation of autocratic society into a democratic political arena.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, in both countries a new generation of Rajvanshis is now coming of age, endowed with memories of the greatness of their families and often unburdened by feelings of aloofness which hampered many in the generation who came to maturity prior to 1947. While not all of these by any means will enter politics, there are enough young politicians within the princely order; hence it appears safe to predict their continued political involvement within the changing arenas of Indian and Pakistani politics.

### *Conclusion*

A dominant theme through this discussion has been the importance of the political environment in conditioning princely behaviour. The political system has defined the opportunity structures within which members of former ruling families have operated. They have no doubt responded to opportunities in different ways, reflecting their own individual background, experiences, and resources. Normal political conditions in India and Pakistan have generally been conducive to the public involvement of representatives of the old order, while crisis situations have tended to undermine that involvement. It is perhaps a mark of the gradualness and peacefulness of the democratic revolution in princely India that the traditional rulers are still accorded legitimacy through their operation of the machinery of the democratic system.

We have also noticed in passing several interrelated processes of transformation of Indian and Pakistani society: from patrimonial to political support; from traditional loyalty to citizen participation; from identity with one traditional princely state to larger identities and loyalties; and, of course, from princes to politicians. Much more research is needed on all of these processes, but they all seem to indicate that, as recent writers tell us, the break between the old and the new is not a sharp one.<sup>31</sup> The traditional rulers exist in a post-traditional society only in the sense that much of the tradition has been remoulded and reworked into new forms. As in other countries where forms of indirect rule have retained traditional rulers and their authority systems, the princely past of India and Pakistan remains pertinent to their political present.



TABLE 1

*Modes of Integration*

<i>Model/1949 States</i>	<i>No. States</i>	<i>Area in sq. miles</i>	<i>Population (Lakhs)</i>
<i>States Unions</i>			
Rajasthan	18	128,424	152.97
Madhya Bharat	25	46,710	79.41
PEPSU	8	10,099	34.68
Vindhya Pradesh	35	24,600	35.77
Himachal Pradesh	21	10,600	9.89
Saurashtra	222	21,062	41.36
Travancore-Cochin	2	9,142	92.65
<i>Merged In Provinces</i>			
Orissa	24	27,671	50.39
Madhya Pradesh	15	31,749	28.34
Bombay			
Gujarat	144	28,257	57.49
Maharashtra	18	10,870	27.85
U.P.	3	6,276	13.25
Madras	3	1,592	5.19
Punjab	3	370	.81
Bihar	2	623	2.05
West Bengal	1	1,321	6.41
<i>Non-Merged</i>			
Jammu & Kashmir	1	84,471	40.22
Hyderabad	1	82,698	163.39
Mysore	1	29,475	90.72
Kutch	1	8,461	5.67
Bilaspur	1	453	1.27
Bhopal	1	6,921	8.38
Tripura	1	4,049	6.49
Manipur	1	8,620	5.79

TABLE 2

*Princely Political Activity*  
(Candidacy for MLA or MP, 1952-67), by Region

Rank	Region	Total No. of Princely Families in Region	Active Families		No. of Candidates	
			No.	%	Total in Region	Per Active Family
1.	Madhya Pradesh (Chhattisgarh)	14	12	85.7	23	1.92
2.	Orissa	24	17	70.8	28	1.65
3.	Punjab/Haryana	9	6	66.7	12	2.00
4.	Rajasthan	22	13	59.1	20	1.54
5.	Maharashtra	15	7	46.7	8	1.14
6.	Saurashtra	39	15	38.5	15	1.00
7.	Vindhya Pradesh	19	6	31.6	9	1.50
8.	Mysore	8	2	25.0	2	1.00
9.	Madhya Bharat	26	4	15.4	6	1.50
10.	Uttar Pradesh	19	4	21.1	9	2.25
11.	Himachal Pradesh	32	6	18.8	7	1.17
12.	Mainland Gujarat	46	6	13.0	7	1.17
	Others	6	3	50.0	4	1.33
	TOTAL	284	101	35.6	150	1.49

TABLE 3

*Areas of Princely States*

Area in sq. miles	Privy Purse States	Families with Candidates	
		No.	%
0 — 100	94	8	8.5
101 — 200	33	8	24.2
201 — 500	43	23	53.5
501 — 1000	38	18	47.4
1001 — 2000	33	16	48.5
2001 — 5000	16	12	75.0
5001 — 10,000	10	7	70.0
Over 10,000	11	8	72.7
Area unknown	6	1	16.7
TOTAL	284	101	35.6

TABLE 4

*Population of States*

<i>Population (1931 Census)</i>	<i>Privy Purse States</i>	<i>Families with Candidates</i> <i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
0 — 1000	7	0	0.0
1001 — 5000	40	3	7.5
5001 — 10,000	26	2	7.7
10,001 — 50,000	68	20	29.4
50,001 — 100,000	38	23	60.5
100,001 — 500,000	67	35	52.2
500,001 — 1,000,000	13	10	76.9
Over 1,000,000	13	7	53.8
Population unknown	12	1	8.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>35.6</b>

TABLE 5

*Area of States and Lok Sabha and Assembly Candidates*

	<i>Area of Princely State</i>	
	<i>1000 sq. miles or less</i>	<i>Over 1000 sq. miles</i>
No. Candidates	151	27
Legislative Assembly		
Candidates only	40	10
Lok Sabha Candidates only	7	12
Both Assembly and Lok Sabha Candidates	10	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>70</b>
Gamma .626		
Somer's D .421		
(asymmetric, candidates dependent)		

TABLE 6

*Population of States of Lok Sabha and Assembly  
Candidates*

	<i>1931 Population of Princely States</i>	
	<i>100,000 or under</i>	<i>Over 100,000</i>
No. Candidates	131	41
Legislative Assembly		
Candidates only	35	15
Lok Sabha Candidates only	6	13
Both Assembly and		
Lok Sabha Candidates	7	24
TOTAL	179	93
Gamma	.571	
Somer's D	.360	
(asymmetric, candidates dependent)		

TABLE 7

*Religion and Caste*

<i>Religion/Caste</i>	<i>No. of States</i>	<i>Active Families</i>	
		<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Muslim	25	6	24.0
Sikh (all Jats)	6	3	50.0
Hindu	253	92	36.4
Rajput	181	72	39.8
Jat	8	5	62.5
Maratha	13	10	76.9
Raj-Gond	5	4	80.0
Brahmin	17	1	5.9
Other	29	0	0.0



TABLE 8

*Family Linkages Among Politically Active Rajvanshis*

<i>Relationship/Family</i>	<i>Relationship/Family</i>
<i>Mother-Son</i>	<i>Brothers</i>
Gwalior	Jodhpur
Ranpur	Bharatpur
Dhenkanal	Faridkot
Tehri-Garhwal	Patiala
Kotah	Kalahandi
Rampur	Rampur
Sakti	Tehri-Garhwal
Sawantwadi	Tikamgarh (Orchha)
<i>Father-Son</i>	Raigarh
Patna	Bamra
Talcher	Talcher
Dhenkanal	<i>Brother-Sister</i>
Jaipur	Dhrangadhra-Jodhpur
Kothi	Patna-Dhenkanal
Kawardha	<i>Father-Daughter</i>
Daspalla	Sarangarh
Nayagarh	<i>In-Laws</i>
<i>Husband-Wife</i>	Jaipur-Baria
Khairagarh	Bikaner-Rewa
Dhenkanal	Dungarpur-Suket
Malerkotla	Loharu-Rampur
Jaipur	Patiala-Patna
Patiala	Patiala-Nalagarh
Jashpur	Kalahandi-Dhenkanal
Bilaspur	
Surguja	

## NOTES

1. The most authoritative studies are V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, Bombay, 1961 and Wayne Ayers Wilcox, *Pakistan: Consolidation of a Nation*, New York, 1963.
2. As the States Reorganization Commission noted, 'The integration of primary States involved administrative changes in an area of about 360,000 square miles inhabited by about 59 million people. ... Impressive as the scale and swiftness of these changes were, it can now be seen in retrospect that the process of rationalizing the administrative system in these areas has been spread over seven or eight years and ... it is still not complete.' *Report of the States Reorganization Commission 1955*, Delhi, 1956, p. 29.
3. Hugh Tinker, *India and Pakistan: A Political Analysis*, New York, 1967, p. 40.
4. The usage of the latter term, however, is consistent with S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Post-Traditional Societies*, New York, 1972, where the emphasis is upon the variety and continuity of traditions.
5. Wilcox, *Pakistan*, pp. 75-83.
6. *Dawn*, 28 July 1969, p.1.
7. V.H. Coelho, *Sikkim and Bhutan*, New Delhi, 1967; Nagendra Singh, *Bhutan: A Kingdom in the Himalayas*, New Delhi, 1972; and Ram Rahul, *Modern Bhutan*, Delhi, 1971.
8. Nagendra Singh, *Bhutan*, pp. 128-35.
9. Duncan Forrester, 'Subregionalism in India: The Case of Telengana', *Pacific Affairs*, LXIII, 1970, pp. 5-21; Hugh Gray, 'The Demand for a Separate Telengana State', *Asian Survey*, XI, 1971, pp. 465-74; K. Seshadri, 'The Telengana Agitation and the Politics of Andhra Pradesh', *Indian Journal of Political Science*, XXXI, 1970, pp. 60-81.
10. Howard Spodek, 'Injustice to Saurashtra: A Case Study of Regional Tensions and Harmonies in India', *Asian Survey*, XII, 5, May 1972, pp. 416-28; William L. Richter, 'Aspects of Political Change in Post-Princely India', *Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies*, VII, 2, April-June 1973, pp. 129-30.
11. *Dawn*, 31 December 1971, p. 4 and 2 May 1972, p. 5.
12. This point is developed at length in William L. Richter, 'Electoral Patterns in Princely India', in Myron Weiner and John Field, eds., *Electoral Politics in the Indian States: Three Disadvantaged Sectors*, Delhi, 1975, pp. 7-14.
13. Richter, 'Electoral Patterns', pp. 14-32.
14. Personal interviews with H.H. Raja Birendra Bahadur Singh and H.H. Rani Padmawati Devi of Khairagarh.
15. For a more thorough background on these matters, see F.G. Bailey, 'Politics in Orissa-VIII: The Ganatantra Parishad', *The Economic Weekly*, 24 October 1959, pp. 1469-76.
16. Needless to say, many similar ties can be found among non-princely politicians as well, such as former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her father, the late Jawaharlal Nehru.
17. *Maharaja Sayajirao III Centenary Commemoration Volume*, Baroda, 1964.
18. The five are his greatgrandson, Maharaja Fatehsinghrao of Baroda, M.P. and former Gujarat Health Minister; Rajmata Gayatri Devi of Jaipur, M.P.; Rajmata Nirmala Raje Bhonsle of Akalkot, former M.L.A. and Minister for Social

- Welfare in Maharashtra; the late Rajmata Parvatidevi Bhonsle of Sawantwadi, former M.L.A. in Bombay state; and her son Rajbahadur Shivaram Sawant Bhonsle of Sawantwadi, former M.L.A. in Bombay and Maharashtra. All of these except Gayatri Devi have been affiliated with the Congress Party.
19. Madhya Pradesh in Myron Weiner, ed., *State Politics in India*, Princeton, 1967, p. 152. One princely M.L.A. referred in an interview to the Ram Raja Parishad as 'our party', suggesting that it was the political organ of the landed aristocracy of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The party's relationship to the princely order and to later rightist political parties such as Swatantra bears further investigation.
  20. Wilcox, *Pakistan*, pp. 32-4.
  21. Karl von Vorys, *Political Development in Pakistan*, Princeton, 1965, pp. 160-1.
  22. Information concerning the party ties of Pakistani princes is rather meagre. Khan Shahabuddin Khan of Jandol, younger son of the late Nawab Shah Jehan Khan of Dir, is a member of the National Awami Party, which was until recently dominant in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. *Dawn*, 28 December 1971, p. 1. By his name, the president of the Sind unit of the Pakistan People's Party in December 1971 appears to have been a member of the ruling family of Khairpur, but I have not been able to confirm this.
  23. Richter, 'Electoral Patterns', pp. 32-9.
  24. A recent study of the 1975 Gujarat elections suggests that the patterns upon which these observations are based may be breaking down in the mid-1970s. Ghanshyam Shah, 'The 1975 Gujarat Assembly Elections in India', *Asian Survey*, XVI, 3, March 1976, p. 280.
  25. Personal letter from Maharaja Sriraj Meghrajji of Dhrangadhra.
  26. A positive correlation ( $r = .397$ ) between turnout and the prince's per cent of the vote suggest that the increased voter participation is in support of rather than against the princely candidates.
  27. For a discussion of the origin, structure, and participation of rulers in the Consultation compared with the earlier Chamber of Princes, see William L. Richter and Barbara N. Ramusack, 'The Chamber and the Consultation: Changing Forms of Princely Political Association in India', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXIV, 3, May 1975, pp. 755-6. The early stages of the privy purse controversy are described in K.C. Mahendru, *The Politics of Privy Purses*, Ludhiana, 1971, and Richter, 'Princes in Indian Politics', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27 February 1971, pp. 535-42.
  28. *Dawn*, 28 July 1969, pp. 1, 6. For a discussion of some of the reactions to the merger of Swat, *Dawn*, 3 August 1969, p. 1.
  29. *Dawn*, 24 December 1971, p. 1.
  30. For an excellent discussion of the structure of political authority in one of these states, see Fredrik Barth, *Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans*, London, 1965.
  31. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition*, Chicago, 1967.

# 11

## An Approach to Politics in the Princely States

ROBERT W. STERN

This is an attempt to develop a more or less systematic approach to an understanding of domestic politics in the princely states. The case study literature is still too sparse to enable us to make any generalizations. But it is ample enough to allow us to explore approaches that are likely to produce hypotheses testable through comparative study. Presumably, we are interested not only in the domestic politics of particular states, but in politics in the princely states in general, and in relating and comparing these politics to politics in British India.

An approach whose theoretical openness seems appropriate to our relatively unexplored field is that suggested by F.G. Bailey in his witty and wise *Stratagems and Spoils*.<sup>1</sup> Following Bailey, we can begin by thinking of the states as political arenas encapsulated within the larger arena of the British Indian empire. More, perhaps, than units of comparable size and social complexity in British India were the states encapsulated arenas. Physically and jurisdictionally separate from each other and from their encapsulating environment, the states were spheres of their own politics. But the boundaries that separated them from their environment were permeable.

We want some way to structure our thinking about how politics operated within these princely-state arenas and how these politics were affected by resources that permeated states' boundaries. The key word is 'resources'. It can be understood, simply, as any thing or things—tangible or intangible—that people or groups of people can make use of in order to serve their own purposes. In so far as politics is a rational pursuit—its means related in some logical way to an achievable end or ends, and not a 'zero-sum game', not a fight to total victory or total defeat—the raw materials of politics, things that *can* be used, are what we think of as resources. Indian soldiers were resources that British generals could use in order to win their



battles. British ideas and statistics were resources that Indian petitioners could use in order to state their cases. 'Administrative reforms' were resources that professional bourgeois could use in their status conflicts with landed aristocrats. Prohibitory orders were resources that could be used by those willing to agitate against them or by agitators' opponents. Jail sentences were resources for satyagrahis who aspired to be martyr-politicians or for those who seized political opportunities while satyagrahis were in jail.

This is not to suggest that only political activity can produce politically useful resources. A good harvest or a bad harvest may be a political resource. Nor is it to suggest that political action inevitably produces political resources. A dominant group, for example, may suppress a subordinate group with resources at hand, and if the subordinate group remains suppressed, so much for that. But if suppression goads the subordinate group into rioting, or rent strikes, or hartals or political organization, then suppression has become their resource. And the dominant group must make more effective use of their resources or look for new resources in order to maintain their dominance.

General and related purposes for which people use resources are to maintain their positions or to reposition themselves within political structures and/or to maintain or restructure political systems. In general, the availability of new resources, or of hitherto undiscovered resources, encourages the ambitions of those members of society who want positional or structural change; it challenges those who do not want change, to (i) make more efficient or extensive use of their old resources, or (ii) discover new maintenance resources, or (iii) block or neutralize their challengers' resources. An approach which emphasizes resources seems particularly appropriate to studies of political change, and the case study literature on politics in the princely states is largely a collection of studies about political change.

The case study literature is particularly attentive to those change-producing resources that permeated state boundaries, directly or indirectly, from British India: resources produced by the British government or by the Indian National Congress organization, or by organizations or forces connected in some direct or indirect way with imperialism or nationalism, e.g. revolutionary groups; national or regional, communal or religious, reform associations; Christian missionaries and British planters and 'box-wallahs'; international

political and economic conditions. Scholars who are concerned with generalizations about politics in the states ought to have no quarrel with this emphasis as long as it does not become locked into a 'Western [or Congress] impact and Indian response' conceptual framework.<sup>2</sup>

The objections to this framework are, first, that the states produced their own resources: the results of relationships, for example, between particular princes and particular groups of their subjects, often unrelated or barely related to imperialism or nationalism. Second, the use or non-use of externally produced resources was often conditioned by local circumstances that antedated the availability of these resources. Conflicts between the Maharajas of Jaipur and their nobility were long-standing and endemic before the British provided the Maharajas with the resources of 'subordinate cooperation', and a class of non-Rajput *gens de la robe* existed for centuries in Jaipur before the British provided them with the resources of 'administrative reform'.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the same or similar impacts produced strikingly different response from state to state. British pressure on the states to 'reform', i.e., bureaucratize their central administrations, for example, appears to have been relatively general, although applied at different times, in different ways, and under different circumstances. But the political effects of administrative reforms were strikingly particularistic.

These objections to the notion of 'Western [or Congress] impact and Indian response' make it unacceptable as a conceptual framework. But neither in fact nor in theory do these objections minimize the importance of externally produced resources in their effects on domestic politics in the states. In fact, as virtually every study in this volume indicates (sometimes in spite of themselves), the British produced resources, and pressured the states to consume them and to produce resources of their own, which, if they rarely transformed state politics, were nonetheless major catalysts or contributors to political change. In theory, an emphasis on generally produced and consumed resources can impose some intellectual order on the particularisms of state politics. It is, of course, these particularisms that are major obstacles to general statements about these politics. But if we begin by hypothesizing from the general, e.g. 'administrative reforms were a major resource in altering the parameters of state politics', we may then be in a position to categorize variables that may explain particularistic responses, as,

the idiosyncrasies of particular princes, the existence or non-existence of landholding aristocracy, the availability of local administrative talent, and the time and manner in which particular durbars became bureaucratized. And ultimately, we may be able to generalize, if not from, then about, the particular.

The British, of course, not only produced resources that were used in state politics, but used the resources of the states and the states as resources for the maintenance of empire: money and soldiers, military alliances and pacification forces, 'natural leadership' to maintain political quiescence among the states' populations, exemplification of 'native' maladministration and general backwardness for the populations of British India, and swords and shields against Congress. We are primarily concerned, of course, with resource use in the states, but frequently there was, explicitly or implicitly, a barter in resources between the states, or people in the states, and their suzerain. Some of the movement of British resources into the states was negotiated or transacted. In the early nineteenth century, British armed force was made available to Rajput princes to subdue their rebellious nobility, and in return the princes committed themselves to act in 'subordinate cooperation' with the British in establishing Pax Britannica in Rajputana. Later in the century, a conservative Maharana of Mewar negotiated the sacking of his pro-British Dewan as the price for Mewar's participation in the construction of a British-sponsored inter-state railway line. In the early twentieth century, the British were willing to lend their support to the Maharaja of Patiala in his feud with the Maharaja of Nabha because the British, too, had a feud with Nabha.<sup>4</sup> Bartering in resources, like any other bargaining, sometimes produces unintended results: the party who bargains from a position of strength discovers that he has given more than he has taken; the party who bargains from a position of weakness is shrewd enough to sell his horse before it dies; the value of bartered resources increases or decreases over time; promises are misunderstood or unkept or incapable of fulfilment.

As it became in fact 'paramount', the British government could at times compel the states to accept British resources. Princes were compelled, for example, to accept British Residents at their courts and British Indian officers in their state services. British Residents frequently acted as imperial pro-consuls during minority administrations, and their 'advice' to ruling princes ranged from commands,

through statements of bargaining positions, to words to the wise. Their reports presumably had some effect on how their superiors in British India regarded and treated particular princes; and within their states, Residents frequently acted as courts of appeal: to disputants during succession crises, to the princes against troublesome sections of their subjects, and to disaffected subjects against their rulers. In all these functions, officially in the service of empire, the Resident was also a resource or a producer of resources that could be used in state politics. At the turn of the century, the Maharaja of Kolhapur used the Resident (and the power of the British behind him) as a resource in the Maharaja's campaign against his Brahman bureaucrats and Brahman 'feudatories'. The results of these successful campaigns were an extension of central bureaucratic rule, the opening of the bureaucracy to the ambitions of non-Brahmans, and the alienation of Brahmins.<sup>5</sup>

Resources from British India sometimes simply permeated state boundaries, unnegotiated, untransacted and uncompelled. Some of the money earned by expatriate Marwaris in the cities of British India flowed into Jaipur to build schools for the sons of Jat farmers. Jat princes in neighbouring Bharatpur, Dholpur, Patiala and Jhind, sustained on their thrones by British imperialism, provided Jaipur's Jat tenants with the resource of *amour propre* in their struggles for status with Rajput petty *jagirdars*. The inter-war depression in agricultural prices stimulated organized political discontent among the Jats and administrative reforms by the Jaipur durbar to ameliorate this discontent. And the agents of administrative reform were frequently, though not exclusively, the products of education, training and experience in British India.

Of all the composite resources that, in one way or another or in combinations of ways, permeated state boundaries, the composite whose elements constituted 'administrative reform', i.e. bureaucratic centralization, seems to have had the greatest effect on altering the parameters of politics in the states. Administrative reforms also appear to connect pre-nationalist to nationalist politics, and nationalist politics to post-independence politics. In Hyderabad, British pressure for administrative reform led to the importation of a 'foreign' administrative class which came to dominate state politics, and whose dominance bred an opposition separate from new nationalist forces which were to gain power under the Congress dispensation and preside over the dissolution of the state. In My-



sore, a Brahman-dominated bureaucracy stimulated the development of a non-Brahman movement which subsequently ended Brahman domination of the Mysore Congress organization and came to power in Mysore after independence.<sup>6</sup> In Baroda, British-sponsored administrative reforms destroyed a political system that the British had previously guaranteed and facilitated the growth of a bureaucratized administration and an alliance between the durbar and wealthy peasants that frustrated the development of the nationalist movement in the state. In Kolhapur, the support that the British gave to the Maharaja's anti-Brahman campaign boosted the cause of anti-Brahmanism in pre- and post-independence Maharashtrian politics. In many of the Rajputana states, British-sponsored administrative reforms increased the powers of royal durbars (if not of the princes themselves), virtually eliminated the *jagirdars* from their political roles at the states' centres, and patronized a professional bourgeoisie which led the Congressite Praja Mandals and eventually formed the government of Rajasthan.

In sum, case studies that focus on administrative reform as a resource in state politics ought to yield not only valuable information about these politics and their consequences, but ought to lend themselves to comparative study and perhaps the formulation of some general statements about politics in the states. Working from state politics upward into the encapsulating arena, case studies focusing on administrative reforms might yield some valuable insights into actual (as opposed to stated) British policy vis-a-vis the states. The general question would seem to be: to what extent did British encouragement of bureaucratic centralization in the states inhere in the general British policy of increasing imperial integration and proceed with little regard to changing British policy statements on the advisability or inadvisability of encouraging such administrative reforms? Or more simply, to what extent were administrative reforms a logical consequence of paramountcy?

Throughout the nineteenth century British officers tried to understand what they called, or hesitated to call, 'feudalism' in Rajputana.<sup>7</sup> We may assume that these attempts to understand were not simply the scholarly pastimes of political agents. To control an exotic society indirectly, through its own political system, and to do so effectively, was in no small measure to control through careful understanding. Bailey, in his discussion of the attempts by British officers to understand the structure of Kond society in Orissa, makes the point neatly:

It is in this sense that knowledge is power. The man who correctly understands how a particular structure works can prevent it from working or make it work differently with much less effort than a man who does not know these things . . . . The man who understands the working of any organization or institution can find out which roles are crucial to the maintenance of those structures, and among those roles which are the most vulnerable.<sup>8</sup>

As Bailey suggests, more than knowledge is required if its objective is power. Access to crucial roles is also required. For a decade and a half after 1818, Jaipur's prince was a minor and British officers were literally screened off from crucial roles by the palace purdah. When this minor prince died and was succeeded by another minor prince and the prospect of yet another decade and a half of inaccessible palace politics, the British acted. 'We had sufficient experience', wrote the Political Agent in 1835, 'of yielding to the caprices of females.'<sup>9</sup> With a British officer at its head, a regency council of leading noblemen was established. And there was no yielding to their caprices either:

The British agent became a supreme authority, neither voting nor taking part in the debates of the Council, but reviewing, approving or disapproving all their proceedings. Their decision with his sanction became the law of the territory; with his veto it fell to the ground.<sup>10</sup>

The first steps on the march to bureaucratic centralization began even as British scholar-administrators were trying to understand Rajput 'feudalism'. Years later, after the Mutiny, when the British rediscovered the utility of Rajputana's 'natural leaders', they were still disinclined to leave these leaders entirely in their 'natural' state. Mayo College was founded in 1875 to socialize princes and leading noblemen to the virtues of 'good government' and to recruit young aristocrats into growing state bureaucracies. Minor princes were provided with British tutors, and ruling princes, with British or pro-British advisers. Under British sponsorship, durbar bureaucracies grew and triumphed over the zenana and made increasing inroads into the customary rights and privileges of the Rajput aristocracy.

Alfred Lyall, from his position as Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana, observed that 'the inclination of an English government [was] *naturally* toward support of the central administration' in the Rajputana states, and that after sixty years of such support,

Rajput princes who were originally clan chiefs had 'modernized their status toward the likeness of territorial kings'.<sup>11</sup> Sixty years later Sardar Patel and V.P. Menon dealt with the princes of Rajputana as territorial kings, and with their ministers; and the Rajput aristocracy's claims to being their chiefs' 'clan coparceners' were briskly argued away and ignored.<sup>12</sup> In sum, over a period of 130 years, while British policy statements on the advisability or inadvisability of 'interference' in states' affairs changed, states' central administrations 'naturally' grew.

We can only at this point suggest, in the form of hypothetical statements, some possible reasons for this 'natural' growth. It may be that further investigations of these hypotheses will provide some insights into the substance (as opposed to the policy statements) of paramountcy. To a handful of British officers in the Political Service were assigned the tasks of protecting imperial interests within the states, and increasingly integrating the states into an imperial whole. For the performance of these tasks, these officers were bureaucratically accountable to their superiors in British India. Yet under the rules of paramountcy state bureaucracies were not accountable to British Residents and Political Agents. But at least the operations of bureaucracies were explicable and accessible to them as the operations of zenanas and aristocratic courts and factions were unlikely to be. Even if there was no question of doing things (and frequently, of course, there was), for the British bureaucrats who filed reports, there was presumably always the question of knowing things. And these Residents and Political Agents, as some of the studies indicate, were at times men of considerable power and generally men of considerable influence. We suggest that under these circumstances, their urge and their capacity to transform what was 'nobody else's'<sup>13</sup> business into business that was knowable and accessible might well have been compelling.

It may be that in the modern bureaucratic empire, no less than in *The New Industrial State*, the places to look for effective policy-making are at the bottom rather than the top of bureaucratic hierarchies.<sup>14</sup> In any case, in no bureaucratic structure can one assume congruence between general policy statements emanating from the top and the implementation of policy with regard to particular cases at the bottom. Sometimes policy statements from the top are best read as threats or messages of assurance to the

bureaucracy's clientele rather than as instructions to bureaucrats. Bureaucrats take their instructions from between the lines, or from what they think is between the lines. Sometimes bureaucrats ignore or circumvent the policy statements of their superiors, and ironically, though not infrequently, they do so in the interests of their careers. i.e. they are aware, or think they are aware, of incongruities between what they are told to do and what they are expected to accomplish.

In addition to these general characteristics of bureaucracies, we ought to note that in India the bureaucratic 'chain of command' from the Governor-General to the Residents was long, complex and intersected at various points with competing bureaucratic and political interests. And at the bottom almost every case was particular. In 1917, for example, Wood in this book tells us, the Governor-General reaffirmed his government's instructions to British officers in charge of minority administrations in the states *not* to regard 'administrative efficiency' as the 'chief object' and 'never [to] forget that their primary duty is the conservation of the customs of the state [s]'. Yet only four years later a British-ruled minority administration in Jaipur began on a decade of administrative reforms which were to reduce severely the customary political influence of the aristocracy at the state's centre and increase the efficiency of the state's bureaucracy.

Such instances apart, where there appears to be a contradiction between enunciated policy and implemented reform, a clearer perception of British pressure on the states for administrative reform might be gained if we treat 'reform' not in general terms but rather in categories. The usual categories are: social, administrative and constitutional reforms. And while there may be others, these are sufficient to make our point. Reforms within these categories may be unrelated or directly or inversely related. Moral abhorrence, in some cases no doubt, prompted British pressure for social reforms. The more usual British priority, however, seems to have been administrative efficiency rather than social reform, as in Travancore, and a concern for social reforms when social problems adversely affected administration, as in Bijolia. Benign neglect of social problems may not only be compatible with pressure for administrative reforms, but may be necessary for administrative reforms if the primary functions of bureaucracy are conceived to be the maintenance of law and order and the collections of revenues



rather than the provision of welfare services.

In the 1920s and 1930s when constitutional reforms became (largely an urban bourgeois) issue in the states, the British apparently made a policy distinction between it and administrative reforms. The Political Department and the Secretary of State for India, V.P. Menon tells us, 'felt that constitutional developments in the States once begun could not in the nature of things be regulated and limited in the same way as administrative advance . . .'<sup>15</sup> Administrative reform was controllable by durbar officials; constitutional reform was not and ultimately threatened durbar control over administration. In the twentieth century, villagers became beneficiaries of those administrative reforms that addressed themselves to such sources of organized peasant discontent as uncertain tenure, high rents and arbitrary cesses. And one may suspect that in some cases an additional objective of such administrative reforms was to contain the demand for constitutional reforms by denying to relatively small urban educated groups the support of militance in the countryside.

Finally and again, administrative reforms were resources in states' arenas. The significance of that, in this context, is that administrative reforms once begun in the states were likely to have developed an impetus of their own, quite apart from British policy statements. The self-enhancing quality of bureaucracies, in general, has been widely noted. Bureaucracies in the states were presumably less responsive to brakes applied to British India than those bureaucracies directly responsible to the Government of India. And it may be that bureaucratization within the states received an independent motive force when bureaucracies became, in effect, arenas within arenas, i.e. when they became either subjects or objects of political competition.

With regard to 'nationalism' as a resource, Anil Seal observes that in British India 'what looked like an all-India [nationalist] movement appears as nothing of the sort'. All-India nationalist leaders trimmed their sails to local winds, and local politicians used nationalism to forward their own provincial ambitions, feather their own political nests, and settle old and new scores. But while they operated at several levels, 'Indian politics were an interconnected system'. The 'clue' to an understanding of the links that connected these politics from their national to their provincial levels, Seal suggests, may be found in the structure of imperial rule; a structure

that as it developed took more Indians and more Indian interests, within its political ambit and developed for its maintenance an increasing need for Indian 'collaboration'.<sup>16</sup>

Seal's general observation seems, if anything, truer of politics in princely India than of the provincial and local politics in British India that he summarizes. His 'clue', however, is unlikely to help us. Although the British encouraged bureaucratic development in the states, the formal bureaucratic (and 'collaborative') structures of British India did not cross state boundaries. It may be, in support of Seal's hypothesis, that these missing links account in some measure for the tardy and sluggish development of organizations in most states until the later 1930s, when the British proposed to forge a formal link between princely India and the imperial government in New Delhi. But missing links are also unlikely to help us. We need a 'clue' of our own to connections between 'nationalist' politics in the states and politics at the all-India level, and we suggest that a resource approach may provide that 'clue'.

'Nationalism' is a sentiment, but it may also be a resource. Sentiments may be resources, and very important ones. As a sentiment-resource for mass consumption, 'nationalism' appears to have had a considerably smaller market in the states than it had in British India. Our missing links apart, this is hardly surprising. Throughout its history, nationalism has been the sentiment-resource of groupings of people who define or identify themselves by some criteria as a 'nation' as often as not in juxtaposition or opposition to other groupings of people, who by some criteria, are defined as 'foreign'. An ideological assumption of the Indian National Congress, for example, was that Indians—caste, class, language, regional and religious differences apart—could and would be defined as 'Indians' in juxtaposition or opposition to the 'British' who were defined as foreign rulers. It hardly needs to be argued that the 'British' were a resource in the development of Indian nationalism. But even by the most imaginative politicians, few—although some, Kashmir, for example—Indian princes could be defined for substantial numbers of their subjects as 'foreign'. And there were obvious political risks in attempting to identify the princes as puppets or clients of the foreigners. Some of the princes had primordial, affective or transactional ties of longstanding with large or critical sectors of their subjects. Some claimed to be divinely ordained protectors of the *dharma*, or religiously sanctioned personifications, of *their*

'nations', and within their kingdoms these claims may well have been accepted as valid by large numbers of people. Maharaja Ganga Singh of Bikaner, an autocrat in his desert kingdom, was an outspoken nationalist, albeit not of the Congress variety, and there were other princes who were competent and self-willed, ambivalent in their feelings toward the foreigners who sustained them, and sensitive to the winds of political change that were blowing across their kingdoms in the 1930s. Under circumstances such as these, nationalism was likely to be used in the states generally as an other-than-sentiment resource, or as a means to ends other than the mobilization of mass sentiment. The Jaipur Praja Mandal, for example, did not participate in the 1942 Quit India agitation; rather, it used its non-participation as a signal of its willingness to cooperate with the durbar in the drafting of constitutional reforms; it used the agitation as a prod to quicken the durbar's pace toward such reforms.

The uses made by politicians in the states of nationalist resources seem to have depended in part on the availability and disposition of other resources: willing allies, durbar tolerance of political activity and organization, the openness of bureaucratic recruitment, the quality and extent of administrative and constitutional reforms, caste and communal political configurations, and so forth. Differences in resource disposition necessarily led to different uses of particular resources. Nationalism was, of course, unlikely to be used as an instrument to force open recruitment into the state's bureaucracy if recruitment was already relatively open, or to force temple entry if there was no group mobilized to make the effort. However differently and selectively nationalist resources were used in the states, it seems clear that they were used primarily for local purposes. Apart from the relative inutility of nationalism as a sentiment-resource, state politics, though open to Congress-produced resources, were structurally unlinked to Congress—as they were open to British-produced resources but structurally unlinked to government. State politicians contended in encapsulated arenas whose boundaries, though permeable, were still boundaries. Within each of these arenas there were different antagonists, in each there were different uses to which nationalist resources could be applied, each was governed by its own rules of the political game and each game promised its own reward. State politicians might use the 'sanctified label' of 'Congress' (with or without a franchise

agreement),<sup>17</sup> or satyagrahis provided by neighbouring PCCs, or personal connections in the Congress 'high command', or Gandhi's blessings, or Nehru's letter, or Sardar Patel's charisma—and *quid pro quos* might or might not have been involved in their use. But the use of these resources apparently did not produce, in comparison to politics in British India, well-articulated systemic inter-connections between the all-India producer and consumers in the states. Or to revert to Seal's metaphor, political relationships of the states and the 'nation' were less between 'levels' than among spheres. Because the states were spheres of their own politics, the Indian National Congress discouraged in no small measure organizational ties with nationalist organizations in the states; and because of the encapsulated quality of their politics, nationalist politicians in the states used appropriate Congress-produced resources but, depending upon their circumstances, made more or less of their organizational connections to the National Congress.

In sum, it seems apparent from the case studies that politicians in princely India used nationalist resources as they used imperialist and indigenous resources: differently, selectively, and primarily for local purposes. It all sounds very calculating. And much of it apparently was. Like political contenders in any arena, nationalist politicians calculate (and miscalculate): is a particular course of action—in the short-run, in the long-run—likely to produce desired results? What desired results are attainable, what groups have common or complementary interests in the attainment of these results? Are they available as allies, what resources do they bring with them, and what price has to be paid for their alliance? That Indian nationalists, and Mahatma Gandhi not least among them, calculated and compromised and wheeled-and-dealed has now become a commonplace conclusion of historical research. Certainly, this is an intellectual advance over hagiography and demonology. Still, we are left with an *apparently* troubling question: by extracting the documented calculations of politicians and the local interests of local groups from the 'movement' in which they presumably participated, are we sometimes left with the impression, not simply that there was no 'all-India [nationalist] movement', but that there was no ideologically grounded nationalist movement of any consequence in the states generally?

The question is only *apparently* troubling. It is troubling, if in our analysis of politics in the states, we continue to ask a question that is



unanswerable and that is unnecessary to ask. Questions as to what really motivated people to behave as they did are generally beyond the capacity of historical research to answer, and nationalism as a sentiment or as a goal of political action can and does mean many different things to many people. Whether the answer to our question is 'yes' or 'no' will frequently depend on the researcher's inclinations toward cynicism or sentimentality, and his or his reference group's definition of nationalism. If, for example, students with apparent spontaneity agitated in the Quit India campaign, can we infer from their seeming lack of calculation, or believe from their reminiscences, that they were more motivated by sentiments of nationalism than their calculating and cautious elders? It is not unreasonable to suggest that nationalism *may* provide a legitimate cause (or resource) for students to quit their classes *en masse* for a variety of motivations: the conscious or unconscious desires to escape from tension, boredom or anonymity, to gain the approval or admiration of their fellows, to shame or rebel against their elders, to strike out at repressive and authoritarian educational institutions, and so forth. Can we assume that those who made physical or financial sacrifices in the cause of nationalism were any truer nationalists than those who calculated to gain from nationalism? It is well known certainly, that self-sacrifice to some cause, and not in India alone, is for many people a means to self-esteem and self-realization and that these goals are widely sought, deeply desired, and highly prized. It is a shallow argument that categorizes Gandhi, about whose motives we know something, as a shrewd politician. He was that, but he was also a seeker who used nationalism as a resource for self-realization, and his quest for self-realization was part of his nationalism and, apparently, part of the nationalism of others. On the other hand, the desire for perhaps more mundane self-aggrandizement is everywhere an apparent motivation for ideological commitment and political action. And even here it is sometimes difficult to infer motivations. Many people, and not only ideologues, sincerely identify their own good with the common good: what's good for the Communist Party or the *kisans*, or General Motors or G.D. Birla is good for the nation.

Less obviously, perhaps, it is unnecessary to ask whether or not there was an ideologically grounded nationalist movement in the states in order to analyse their politics. We need not think in terms of the existence or non-existence of an 'all-India [nationalist]

movement' of which the states were or were not a part, but rather we can think in terms that we have already suggested: of an all-India nationalist organization which, with its local and provincial branches, produced political resources available for use in the states.

We can perhaps illustrate these two points and the utility of the resource approach in general by referring to Rajat K. Ray's account of the Bijolia agitations in this book. Our point of departure is the observation of a nationalist politician, apparently made at the height of the agitation: 'I saw that every man, woman, old and young . . . in [Bijolia] . . . were filled with nationalist sentiment.' What ought we to do with this observation? It is the sort of statement that we would expect a nationalist politician to make. Was the observation accurate? Did Ram Narain Choudhry think that the observation was accurate when he made it? We don't know. Because the Bijolia peasants sang nationalist songs and allowed themselves to be led by nationalist politicians, can we infer that Choudhry's observation was accurate? Because the Bijolia peasants were 'backward' people in a 'backward' place with longstanding grievances against their landlord, can we infer that Choudhry's observation was simply nationalist rhetoric? If a British observer in his reminiscences had described the Bijolia agitation as a fairly typical peasant rebellion that had fallen into the hands of outside agitators, would we give greater credence to his description than to Choudhry's? Why? The points are, of course, that these questions are unanswerable and that we need not ask them in order to understand what happened in Bijolia and how Bijolia was related to its encapsulating arena of nationalist politics. There was apparently an inter-change of resources. Nationalist politicians were used by peasants to help them organize their discontent and negotiate or frighten settlement of longstanding grievances. Nationalist politicians used the Bijolia agitation by politicizing and 'nationalizing' it: propagandizing it in the nationalist press, frightening the British with it, bringing Gandhi and Jamnalal Bajaj into it, using it to energize the Rajasthan Seva Sangh and to extend its leadership into other areas of rural discontent in Mewar and into arenas of urban disaffection. From this inter-change of resources, we are led to questions about other inter-changes. For example, in what ways was the Bijolia agitation a resource for the British? Did it help the British to depose an uncooperative prince and to press for the sort

of administrative reforms that were meant to defuse organized discontent in the countryside? How can we explain that Vijay Singh Pathik was brought into Bijolia and assisted in his activities by Bijolia officials during a durbar-appointed minority administration? Were the resources of nationalism used in Mewar, as elsewhere, in attempts to bring rural and urban discontent together into an alliance of complementary interests; and if not, why not? Was it generally the case in Mewar (and in Rajputana) that the resources of nationalism were more available to landed peasants, like the Dhakars, than to landless peasants; and that a check on the landed peasantry's use of nationalist resources was the availability of state resources to the landless?

There are, of course, other questions about Bijolia and politics in Mewar, and politics elsewhere as they responded first to British and then to nationalist influences. We have suggested here no more than a way in which they might be asked.

## NOTES

1. New York, 1969.
2. For an argument against this framework see P.H.M. van den Dungen, 'Changes in Status and Occupation in Nineteenth Century Panjab', in D.A. Low, ed., *Soundings in Modern South Asian History*, London, 1968.
3. For this and subsequent references to Jaipur, see K.L. Kamal and Robert W. Stern, 'Jaipur's Freedom Struggle and the Bourgeois Revolution', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, XI, 3, 1973 and 'Class, Status and Party in Rajasthan', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, XII, 3, 1974.
4. Barbara N. Ramusack, 'Incident at Nabha: Interaction between Indian States and British Indian Politics', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVIII, 3, 1969.
5. Ian Copland, 'The Maharaja of Kolhapur and the Non-Brahman Movement', *Modern Asian Studies*, VII, 2, 1973 and Donald B. Rosenthal, 'From Reformist Princes to "Cooperative Kings"', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 and 26 May, 2 June 1973.
6. James Manor, 'Gandhian Politics and the Challenge to Princely Authority: Mysore, 1936-1947', in D.A. Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*, London, 1977.
7. The two most famous scholar-bureaucrats were James Tod, who called it feudalism, and Alfred Lyall, who denied that it was feudalism. See Tod's 'Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan', *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, and Lyall's Introduction to *Gazetteer of Rajputana 1879*.
8. Bailey, *Stratagems*, p. 187.
9. L.C. Brooke, *Political History of the State of Jeypore*, Calcutta. 1868.
10. Ibid.
11. Lyall, Introduction, *Gazetteer*. Italics mine.

12. Government of India, *Report of the Rajasthan-Madhya Bharat Jagir Enquiry Committee*, 1949, and V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, Bombay, 1956.
13. Wood's characterization of the preferred style of durbar politics in Kathiawar.
14. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, Boston, 1967. One gains the impression from Philip Mason that this may well have been the case, Philip Woodruff (pseud.), *The Men Who Ruled India*, II, *The Guardians*, London, 1954.
15. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States*, p. 44.
16. Anil Seal, 'Imperialism and Nationalism in India', in John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal, eds., *Locality, Province and Nation*, Cambridge, 1973, pp. 1-26.
17. Robin Jeffrey, 'A Sanctified Label—"Congress" in Travancore Politics, 1938-48', in Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*.



# 12

## *Laissez-Faire* and Traditional Rulership in Princely India

D. A. LOW

The earlier studies in this book are not generally concerned with what I have elsewhere ventured to term 'the first crisis' of traditional rulerships confronted with empire—the crisis which occurs when empire is established over them. There are nevertheless indications that the present studies confirm that earlier analysis. It turned on distinguishing between the fate of those traditional rulerships which were destroyed by the advancing imperial power, and those which, to whatever degree and in whatever way, were made subordinate to it. In the former the imperial power simply superseded the pre-existing ruler and took unto itself the political authority which he had previously exercised. In the latter the ruler was left in his place but found himself subjected to the superior authority of the imperial power superimposed above him<sup>1</sup>—'paramountcy' as the British in India formally termed this.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of establishing their empire in India, the British were long uncertain—as the Bengal story in the mid-eighteenth, and the Oudh story in the early nineteenth century indicate—as to whether they should or should not expunge India's traditional rulerships from their political map. The survival of some traditional rulerships at that stage, and the disappearance of others, would seem in fact to be difficult to explain systematically. 'Consider some of the contrasts here [I argued previously]—with those rulerships that survived their annexation by the British being mentioned first: amongst the Marathas of Central India, for example, the contrast between Baroda and Indore, on the one hand, and Nagpur and the Peshwa's dominions on the other; in north-western India between the erstwhile Punjab province of Kashmir and Punjab proper; or elsewhere between the fate of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawab of Bengal, or the fate of the talukdars of Oudh and the talukdars of Agra.'<sup>3</sup> To these one can now add the differential fates

of the Maharajas of Travancore and Cochin, and the Zamorin of Calicut,<sup>4</sup> and of the rulers from the Sukerchakia *misal* in the Punjab generally, and the rulers from the Phulkian *misal* in Patiala and Nabha specifically.<sup>5</sup>

Much turned on the cut and thrust of the early confrontations between many of India's traditional rulers and the first British administrators to confront them. In these the traditional ruler had his *amour propre* to consider as well as his instinct for survival. Which would be uppermost at the moment of crisis could well turn upon some quite particular circumstance—not least in the individual ruler's own personality.<sup>6</sup> There was no less uncertainty upon the British side. Some British officers (like Metcalfe) were instinctively expungers. Others (like Malcolm) were at heart retainers. Lord Dalhousie, the apparent arch-annexer (Governor-General 1847–56), has been shown not to have been the unhesitating annexer which he has been generally portrayed.<sup>7</sup> There is the striking case of his successor, Lord Canning (Viceroy 1856–62), who changed his mind about Oudh;<sup>8</sup> while it is well known that the head-on disagreements between the Lawrence brothers in the Punjab turned on just this point.<sup>9</sup> Until many more case studies of these 'first crises' are available it will be difficult to take their analysis further. It seems clear, however, that the combination of all these uncertainties made for no set pattern, and was the prime cause of the patchwork quilt that came to be 'British' and 'princely' India under the British raj.

After 1860 the whole bore two marks. 'Annexation', i.e. the further expunging of traditional rulerships, the 'princely states' as they were called, ceased. At the same time 'British India', the more directly British ruled parts, soon stood out as much the more important portion of the British Empire in India, and on the whole (there were some significant exceptions) saw a much larger growth of modernizing developments: railways and other forms of communication; universities and other forms of western education; industry, irrigation, cash-cropping, and so on.

The impression that the British always paid much less attention to the administration of the princely states than to the administration of British India, and that in princely India they accordingly refrained from interfering with the administration of the states—a view which has been widely shared—now seems, in at least two respects, questionable. The periods, when the ruler was a minor and

British officials directed the administration of a state, were seemingly much more frequent and protracted than has been generally appreciated.<sup>10</sup> Jeffrey has shown, moreover, how in the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries there were many fluctuations in the balance of power between the British Resident in a princely state, its ruler the Maharaja, and his chief minister the Dewan.<sup>11</sup> To this analysis Haynes' study in the present volume adds a fourth set of possible protagonists—the *jagirdars*, as they were often called, the noblemen within the rulership, often with subordinate fiefs of their own, who were frequently keen participants as well in the struggle for power within a state.<sup>12</sup>

The earlier impression that in princely India the British tended to observe a self-denying ordinance in relation to the administration of the princely states does seem to be borne out even so when one enters the twentieth century. As we have seen, from about 1860 annexations ceased. (In 1881 there occurred indeed the 'rendition' in Mysore, when direct administrative control over the state, which had been assumed by the British in 1831, was restored to the Maharaja.)<sup>13</sup> The major step thereafter in the development of British policy towards the Indian princely states came with the Earl of Minto's Udaipur speech of 1909. In this he enunciated, as Viceroy of India (1905–10), the so-called policy of *laissez-faire* towards the states. The key passages in this speech ran as follows:

... our policy is with rare exceptions one of non-interference in the internal affairs of Native States ... The foundation stone of the whole system is the recognition of identity of interests between the Imperial Government and the Durbars and the minimum of interference with the latter in their own affairs. I have always been opposed to anything like pressure on Durbars with a view to introducing British methods of administration. I have preferred that reforms should emanate from Durbars themselves and grow up in harmony with the traditions of the State. It is easy to overestimate the value of administrative efficiency. It is not the only object to aim at, though the encouragement of it must be attractive to keen and able Political Officers ... though abuses and corruption must, of course, as far as possible be corrected, I cannot but think that Political Officers will do wisely to accept the general system of administration to which the Chief and his people have been accustomed. The methods sanctioned by tradition in States are usually well adapted to the needs and relations of the ruler and his people. The loyalty of the latter to the former is generally a personal loyalty which administrative efficiency, if carried out on lines unsuited to local conditions, would lessen or impair ...<sup>14</sup>

From one angle this pronouncement was primarily designed to humour the Indian princes so as to secure their loyalty to the British connection. By this time the British were very anxious that the princely states should be a firm bulwark against the spread of nationalism and 'sedition' (as they were prone to call this) which was now exercising them greatly in British India. Shortly afterwards the Gaikwad of Baroda (who had apparently, and perhaps inadvertently been harbouring a particularly vehement group of nationalists) was threatened with deportation for stepping out of line upon these points.<sup>15</sup> The message, however, which the British were concerned to deliver seems to have been well taken by the great majority of Indian princes, since from this time onwards they generally took their own steps to see that nationalist activity should not be countenanced in their states.<sup>16</sup>

Minto's Udaipur speech had its consequences in another significant respect-too. For having by the first decade of the twentieth century seen annexations halted and *laissez-faire* proclaimed, the princes naturally began to look for opportunities to push their advantage further, and soon set about challenging the very remnants of British 'paramountcy' itself. When the greatest of the princes, the Nizam of Hyderabad, made the most daring of their attempts to do this in 1926 he was sharply rebuffed by the Viceroy, Lord Reading.<sup>17</sup> But undaunted, the princes more generally tried again, first in their submissions to the Butler Commission on the Indian princely states (1929)<sup>18</sup> and then (when this merely confirmed that British 'paramountcy must remain paramount') by undertaking at the first Round Table Conference in 1930 to join with the Indian liberal politicians from British India in the creation of an All-India Federation.<sup>19</sup> Throughout these proceedings the animus which so many princes displayed against the most salient of their British masters, the Political Department of the Government of India, was a measure of their concern to push all remaining curbs upon their freedom to manoeuvre aside. In one forthright (but ultimately forlorn) step they came very close to doing this. In 1940 they eventually reversed their position upon an All-India Federation and delivered the *coup de grace* to the by now long nurtured plans of the British as well as others to create one.<sup>20</sup> The apotheosis of the persistent campaigns of quite a number of princes to establish their own untrammelled autonomy can be discerned in the altogether desperate attempts in 1947-8 by Travancore and more



particularly by Hyderabad to secure their own separate independence from the constitutional dominance of independent India.<sup>21</sup> In the sharpness of the reaction they displayed to these adventures, Patel and Nehru, the new rulers of independent India, were the heirs of Reading. And it was soon all over. The princely states as such disappeared.<sup>22</sup>

In view of the central importance to British policy towards the Indian princely states of the *laissez-faire* doctrine in the first half of the twentieth century, its genesis warrants some exploration. It seems to have lain in the conjunction of two sets of considerations which arose well back in the nineteenth century; both, it would seem, were related to much wider currents in British imperial—and indeed British ‘home’—thinking than may have been appreciated.

It has been suggested elsewhere that in late nineteenth century Britain there was a marked reaction to the reforming tendencies which had been prevalent in its governing circles in the first half of the century. This shift was centred upon the proposition that society was more fragile than had earlier been allowed, and that checks should therefore be imposed upon the workings of the social order so as to ensure that liberty should not become licence. There is a good deal of evidence that this late nineteenth century change of ideology in Britain itself came to have its counterparts in the Empire. The Deccan Agriculturists’ Relief Act of 1879, the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900, and the Co-operative Societies Act of 1904, it has been suggested, all illustrate a novel attitude of this kind in the British Government of India. It is not too difficult to point to comparable changes of emphasis elsewhere in the Empire.<sup>23</sup> More directly to the present point, Lord Minto’s attitude to the Punjab Canal Colonies Bill in 1907 indicates, from a closely related instance, just how strongly he was moved by the new doctrine. When confronted by the canal colonists’ agitation against the Bill, he was clearly highly sensitive to the suggestion (which by implication the colonists were making) that to disturb the existing social order could be very undesirable. In fostering the Canal Colonies Bill, this was precisely what the Punjab administration was in effect seeking to do. The possibility of grave social disruption looked to be real. In an otherwise remarkable decision Minto decided to veto the Bill.<sup>24</sup> It is not difficult to see that his Udaipur speech proclaiming the policy of *laissez-faire* towards the princely states expressed essentially similar thoughts.

The new policy's chief architect was Minto's Political Secretary, Harcourt Butler.<sup>25</sup> He had had his formative experience, not in the princely states, but in Oudh, that part of the United Provinces where 'lower-level' traditional rulerships in the persons of the talukdars of Oudh had been most assiduously preserved in British India in the late nineteenth century in a deliberate effort to keep what were said to be the old structures of society in being. Butler had been Commissioner of Oudh, indeed the doyen of the 'Oudh School' of British administrators,<sup>26</sup> before becoming Political Secretary of the Government of India. That the views he held were, however, not only dependent upon his previous experience, but reflected a much wider British attitude of mind at the time, can be well illustrated by considering the close likeness between the policy he had originally formulated in respect to Oudh, and then transferred to the Indian princes more generally, and the simultaneously propounded doctrine of another old India hand, General Sir Frederick Lugard, Lieutenant-Governor of Northern Nigeria, with his so-called policy of 'Indirect Rule'. True, Lugard wished to exercise more direct control over the governments of the Emirates of Northern Nigeria than Butler did over their counterparts in India. Lugard was deeply concerned, however, to ensure that the evils of British India as he saw them—local lawyers in particular—did not become replicated in Northern Nigeria, and in this respect stood very close to Butler.<sup>27</sup> His prime concern was, moreover, to maintain traditional rulerships as a fortress of societal security in a changing world—a pursuit which went even further than he himself had ever intended under his successor, Charles Temple (son, let it be remarked, of Sir Richard Temple, Governor in his day of both Bengal and Bombay, and in the latter capacity architect of the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1879).<sup>28</sup> Such a concern was directly on a par with Butler's, and while the similarity between Lugard's policy in Northern Nigeria and Butler's in Oudh has been noticed hitherto, the similarities between Lugard's preaching of 'Indirect Rule' more widely in Africa and Butler's of *laissez-faire* more generally in the Indian states may now be emphasized as well.<sup>29</sup>

In the event *laissez-faire* probably owed its vogue to a second feature of late nineteenth and early twentieth century British thinking as well. Here it seems possible to come to terms with all those who complain that to place an emphasis upon the primacy of intellectual currents in determining the course of administrative history

is to overlook the influence upon the minds of those more directly concerned with the development of administrative policies of their own day-to-day administrative experience. For concomitant with the spread of essentially intellectual ideas about the inherent fragility of social orders there was the growing experience in India itself of how princely states could, if they were only left to their own devices, 'modernize' their governments—provided the ruler himself was willing, and a forceful Dewan was somehow available. With such men in the latter offices as Sir T. Madhava Rao (the extraordinarily energetic Dewan of first Travancore, 1857–72, and then Baroda, 1875–82) and Salar Jung I (of Hyderabad, 1853–83)<sup>30</sup> who combined a predilection for maintaining traditional proprieties while introducing bureaucratic government into their states, there were soon models to which self-respecting nineteenth and twentieth-century British administrators could point as the artificers of rejuvenated princely states under their self-denying policy of *laissez-faire*.

In the twentieth century great store came in fact to be set upon the often lordly but highly efficient Indian Dewan. Among their number there were soon such men as Sir Mirza Ismail, Sir Akbar Hydari, Sir V.T. Krishnamachariar, Sir Manubhai Mehta, Sir Krishnaswami Aiyar, Sir Prabhashanka Pattani, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Sir M. Visvesvaraya (several of whom served in more than one state).<sup>31</sup> They were often accepted by their princes (even when reluctantly) as being successful upholders of a state's prestige in a novel era, without the prince himself having to trouble himself too greatly. They were generally accepted as well by the British, as exemplars of the doctrines of efficient government to which British administrators of the day (both at 'home' and 'abroad', let it be said) attached such importance. They even enjoyed prestige in Indian—and not least Indian nationalist—circles in British India for showing what twentieth-century Indian administrators could accomplish if they were only left to be masters in their own domains.<sup>32</sup> Taking the wider view one might indeed venture the thought that had such Dewans really been given their head they might have tested out a 'Prussian' or 'Meiji' road to Indian development—with an authoritarian government, under skilled and forceful administrative command, leading the way. There came to be just an occasional sign of such a possibility in such states as Gwalior and Baroda.<sup>33</sup>

But however prominent the Dewan's role may have been at one

stage, it was all the same seriously flawed, as events were soon to show. Its deformity stemmed from the very nature of traditional rulership as it operated in India, and it is to this that we must now turn our attention.

In considering those who stood politically subordinate to a traditional ruler it seems important to draw a distinction between 'officials' and 'chiefs'. The former were directly appointed by and primarily beholden to the ruler (and in the latter respect are to be distinguished from 'bureaucrats' who are primarily subject to a code of law). The latter, though they might have to have their subordinate positions ratified by the ruler, were not appointed by him, but owed their position to their own primacy within some sub-group within the rulership. China under its dynasties had a system largely of the first kind. Over the centuries India by contrast had a system largely of the second. Within the Indian body politic there were usually several superimposed levels of such chiefs.<sup>34</sup> Noblemen-near the base (*jagirdars* as they were called in so many places) were simply the occupants of the lower levels. Various superimposed above them were Rajas and Maharajas. All were eventually subordinate, even if often only notionally, to an emperor—the *cakravartin* as the Hindu texts had it. From one point of view such men were chiefs; from another they were rulers; in so many respects this seems to have been the primary manner in which traditional rulerships were structured in India.

All such rulers had, of course, their own administrative officials. But there was no development in India of anything like the greatly elaborated and often immensely important Mandarinate in China. There was little to compare too with the institutionalized hierarchies of officials which were found in Africa (in Northern Nigeria these could be most complex, and predated not only the British but the Fulani conquest).<sup>35</sup> In India, moreover, it is striking how such powerful officials as did exist tended to become chiefs, witness not only the notable examples in the late Mughal Empire of the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh, but also the propensity of such officials to take the title of 'Raja'.

A prime consequence of all this was the strong tendency of rulers when they were seeking their own leading officials to recruit not from amongst their own people, but from outsiders, so as to check the propensity of such officials to develop local patrimonies of their own. This preference was particularly marked in respect of the



appointment of outside professional Dewans of the kind we have noticed already. As Haynes has shown earlier in this book, rulers in the Rajputana states were prone to appoint Muslim officials from the Delhi region.<sup>36</sup> They also employed Kashmiri Pandits; even Bengalis.<sup>37</sup> Likewise Leonard shows how non-Mulki, western-educated Muslims from northern India were eagerly sought by the Nizam of Hyderabad.<sup>38</sup> Tamil Brahmins, moreover, were regularly employed in Malayalam-speaking Travancore,<sup>39</sup> and so on. There were, as we know, exceptions. But they were not very many. There was one, but only one, local Nayar Dewan in Travancore; one, but only one, local Patidar Dewan in Baroda.<sup>40</sup>

The relative lack of elaborately institutionalized hierarchies of officials and in particular the relative absence of locally well-entrenched Dewans seems to have been of major importance as India's princely states came to face what I have called elsewhere their 'second crisis', 'which came with the onset of national independence linked to the ballot box and to universal suffrage'.<sup>41</sup> The juxtaposition of two contrasts here seems at first sight puzzling. First, while some traditional rulers in Africa—for example again in Northern Nigeria—in the years before independence were able to organize modern-style political parties to their own advantage, Indian princes, apparently, were not. Second, while in India itself a number of ex-traditional rulers could nevertheless make the switch after independence to being politicians participating in electoral politics, ex-Dewans do not seem to have done so. The contrasts here can be well epitomized in the persons of the two major figures in Nigeria in the years before as well as after its attainment of independence. Both Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello and Alhaji Sir Abubakar were former 'District Heads', that is former district officials of Emirate governments. Both became leaders of the dominant Northern People's Congress. Sir Ahmadu Bello became Premier of Northern Nigeria; Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Prime Minister of the Nigerian Federation.<sup>42</sup> It is difficult to think of any Indian princely official with a similar record.

Some suggestions as to why, by contrast with Maharajas, Dewans did not take easily to electoral politics after independence can perhaps be offered from what has been said above. They came pre-eminently from the small 'service' communities who still saw their future mainly in day-to-day administration. More to the point, they did not have close social bonds with those they administered,

nor did they often play any significant role in the leadership of the local moral community—in both instances in striking contrast to their Northern Nigerian counterparts.<sup>43</sup> Given the other considerations which Richter has discussed earlier in this book,<sup>44</sup> princes in India who did have these characteristics seem on the other hand to have been able to adapt themselves to electoral politics, at all events in the post-independence era. If, like the Gaikwad of Baroda or the Maharani of Jaipur, they belonged to prominent communities within their electorates, they were as well placed as any to secure electoral support. If to this they could add the prestige of connections with the former rulership in the area—to which belonged vestiges of the headship of the local moral community as well—they were, to begin with at least, especially well placed.

Yet, if (as was evidently quite often the case) this could be so, why did they not fashion a substantial electoral base *before* independence, as the Nigerian Emirs (and the Kabaka of Buganda in Uganda, to cite one other example)<sup>45</sup> succeeded in doing?

*Laissez-faire* had something to do with it. In the meaning given to this in India, there was not merely no effective pressure by the British on the princely states to move towards electoral politics. The states were expected to take their own rather different path—for all the rhetoric of the British to the contrary. Standing in the way, moreover, in more respects than one, were the forceful Dewans. As men on the whole divorced from the local population at large, effective electoral politics were a major threat to such Dewans personally. Concomitantly, they were amongst the last who could have managed the exigencies of electoral politics since they were often strangers to the powerful networks of local influence (as Northern Nigeria District Heads were not). In any event their presence was in no way pervasive. Over large parts of the princely states local power was in the hands of their, and their ruler's inherent rivals, the *jagirdars* (or whatever the lower-level chiefs were called).<sup>46</sup> Consequently, so long as their options remained open, such Dewans were more concerned to husband their existing authority, than tailor it anew. Even if princes had wished to fashion electoral politics in their states to their own ends, it is in no way certain that they had the necessary instruments to do this. *Laissez-faire* in association with weak official hierarchies inhibited such developments.

Following the First World War, few, however, could fail to realize

that a major new crisis for the Indian body politic stood in the offing. In fairness it should be emphasized that the first portents that it might be resolved by means of mass electoral politics did not come until the Congress victories in the provinces of British India in 1937<sup>47</sup>—and, as we must see, there were two or three special curbs at that time upon any large scale move towards electoral politics by the princely states.

In such an uncertain vortex the most striking feature of the princes' response was the range and disparity of the expedients they pursued. A few actually tried to effect reform. In 1937 the Maharaja of Cochin introduced a variation of 'Dyarchy' into his state (such as had been introduced in British India in 1920).<sup>48</sup> The Raja of Aundh adopted Gandhian principles.<sup>49</sup> The Maharaja of Bikaner on the other hand, and at first many others with him, supported the British Indian proposal for an All-Indian Federation. Some, however, soon broke away from this course and pursued other expedients. They parleyed with the right wing section of the British Conservative Party. They formed factions which fostered particular—and generally unacceptable—variations on the federation theme;<sup>50</sup> and when federation itself was eventually in the Government of India Act of 1935 they spun out inordinately the detailed negotiations with the Government of India which this entailed.<sup>51</sup> Simultaneously, as Ramusack has earlier recorded in this book, the Maharaja of Patiala sought to establish himself as a pre-eminent leader of the Sikh community, while, in his exposed position as Muslim ruler of a Hindu-majority state,<sup>52</sup> the Nizam of Hyderabad leant upon the non-Mulkis in his state (and eventually upon the Razakars, or Muslim terrorists).<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, the Dewan of Travancore for his part effectively broke the militant opposition against his regime<sup>54</sup>—while the Dewan of Baroda bent before it.<sup>55</sup> It is clear that by contrast with the British in British India, the princes could be at once more ruthless and more accommodating in tackling their problem. All in all they seem to have been decidedly more flexible in their responses; and if this entailed considerable confusion, it nevertheless had some short-term survival value.

In considering the situation in the 1930s, it is instructive to allude once more to the parallels with Northern Nigeria. Sustained efforts were being made by this time during Sir Donald Cameron's notable governorship of Nigeria (1931–5) to develop the governments of Northern Nigeria Emirates.<sup>56</sup> There was British rhetoric to this end

in India: the Governor of the United Provinces, Sir Malcolm Hailey, spoke upon these lines at the installation of a new Nawab of Rampur in 1934.<sup>57</sup> But in truth there was no Cameron in India to push the princes effectively into substantial administrative reform; and by the end of the 1930s the last thing the British wanted in the Indian princely states was popular sovereignty.

For by 1937 Congress had won control of too many provincial governments in British India for the comfort of the British. If the plans of the British for maintaining their control over India by means of an All-India Federal Assembly, which would have a blocking third of princely votes, were to be sustained, it was essential that the princely states should not also fall prey to the vagaries, as the British now saw them, of electoral politics. Praja Mandals had sprung up or been reactivated in a number of princely states in the late 1930s as small coteries of new professional men there suddenly realized how far advanced politically their like in British India had become, whilst they themselves still stood subject to the autocratic rule of Dewans and Maharajas.<sup>58</sup> Such men were now everywhere pressing for elected Legislatures and Executives, and were even beginning to establish close links with the British-India-based Indian National Congress.

The most critical episode at this point seems to have been the one which Wood has recorded in this book when Gandhi sought to force a more popular reform committee upon the Thakore of Rajkot.<sup>59</sup> The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, was very anxious indeed about this, and was evidently greatly relieved when the Thakore eventually won out. The failure of the Rajkot satyagraha was not, as it happened, followed by the creation of the All-India Federation as the British had planned it. But it seems not only to have stopped a precipitation into meaningful electoral politics in the states, but to have presented many of their authorities with a golden opportunity to suppress the radical movements against them. All this was then followed in 1942 by strong princely support for the British clamp-down on those within the states who were tempted to participate in the Quit India Movement.<sup>60</sup>

But, in the course of these events the princely regimes irredeemably alienated not only the Congress in British India, but so many of the new generation of politicians within their own states as well. As Manor has argued, the fate of the princely states was probably settled several years earlier,<sup>61</sup> but the halt to constitutional reform



in the late 1930s, obviously with the heartfelt, even if only tacit support of the British, confirmed this. For the repression that came during the Second World War years gave the new politicians in the states the kind of kudos as political martyrs which the civil disobedience movements had already given to so many Congressmen in British India. They were thus well placed to recruit support from wider circles, and, given the limited political reach of the princely officials, this was by no means difficult to do. Although in accord with the manner in which traditional rulership operated in India, these wider circles still frequently accorded to their local ruler's status and legitimate political authority, they quickly treated the now discredited Dewani regimes as entirely expendable. The new generation of political leaders were now greatly supported in pulling these down.<sup>62</sup>

It is being shown elsewhere that by the 1930s there was being widely added to the original Congress following amongst the intelligentsia and the commercial communities in India, substantial support from the dominant peasants in the villages of British India.<sup>63</sup> By and large princely India ran in this respect just a decade behind. As several recent studies have shown, during the late 1930s, and more particularly in the mid-1940s, dominant peasant leaders in a wide range of princely states started to hitch their fortunes to the new political stars.<sup>64</sup> The shift was only moderated here in the way we have noticed already: that where princes had close social affinities with prominent communities in the new electorates, they possessed a singular advantage in playing the new political rules, if they could only bring themselves to do this.

The conclusion to suggest is that in view of the manner in which traditional rulerships have operated in India for so long; in view of the weak institutionalization of their hierarchies; and in view of the major British encouragement to them to take their own distinctive course, it is hardly surprising that when the Indian princely states faced their 'second crisis', the authority of unentrenched Dewans should have disappeared immediately, even where the authority of many traditional rulers themselves survived somewhat longer. But for the princes too, the future held little ultimate promise, since in the newly independent India an alternative, and much more powerful, apparatus of power and authority now existed, which depended only marginally upon traditional values. The princely regimes were faced with the choice of either crumbling before it or speedily merging with it. The denouement had become inescapable.

## NOTES

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51. This will be readily apparent to anyone who has glanced at the records for this period of the Reforms Office of the Government of India in the National Archives of India.
52. Ramusack, ch. V in this book, pp. 180-4.
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## APPENDIX

### *The 83 States with Salutes of 11 Guns or More*

<i>Name of State</i>	<i>Area in sq. miles</i>	<i>Population (1931)</i>
The 21-Gun States (Five)		
Hyderabad	82,698	14,436,000
Gwalior	26,637	3,523,000
Mysore	29,475	6,557,000
Kashmir	85,885	3,646,000
Baroda	8,164	2,443,000
The 19-Gun States (Six)		
Travancore	7,625	5,096,000
Bhopal	6,924	730,000
Kolhapur	3,217	957,000
Indore	9,902	1,325,000
Udaipur	12,923	1,566,000
Kalat	73,278	342,000
The 17-Gun States (Thirteen)		
Cutch	8,249	514,000
Bikaner	23,317	936,000
Jodhpur	36,021	2,125,000
Jaipur	15,590	2,631,000
Tonk	2,553	317,000
Bharatpur	1,978	481,000
Bundi	2,220	216,000
Karauli	1,227	140,000
Kotah	5,725	685,000
Patiala	5,942	1,625,000
Bahawalpur	16,434	984,000
Cochin	1,417	1,205,000
Rewa	13,000	1,587,000
The 15-Gun States (Seventeen)		
Sikkim	2,818	110,000
Sirohi	1,994	216,000
Jaisalmer	16,062	76,000
Banswara	1,606	225,000
Dungapur	1,460	227,000
Partabgarh	889	77,000
Alwar	3,158	750,000
Kishengarh	858	86,000
Dholpur	1,173	255,000
Khairpur	6,050	227,000
Dhar	1,800	243,000
Datia	912	158,000
Dewas (Junior)	419	71,000

Dewas (Senior)	449	83,000
Idar	1,669	262,000
Orchha	2,080	314,000
Bhutan	18,000	300,000

## The 13-Gun States (Thirteen)

Cooch Behar	1,318	590,000
Tripura	4,116	380,000
Porbandar	642	115,000
Nawanagar	3,791	409,000
Junagadh	3,337	545,000
Dhrangadhra	1,167	89,000
Bhavnagar	2,961	500,000
Palanpur	1,769	264,000
Jhalawar	813	107,000
Nabha	947	287,000
Rajpipla	1,517	206,000
Ratlam	693	107,000
Jaora	602	100,000

## The 11-Gun States (Twenty-nine)

Manipur	8,638	445,000
Wankaner	417	44,000
Radhanpur	1,150	70,000
Morvi	822	113,000
Gondal	1,024	205,000
Sirmur	1,046	148,000
Suket	392	58,000
Bilaspur	453	101,000
Chamba	3,127	147,000
Faridkot	638	164,000
Malerkotla	165	83,000
Mandi	1,139	207,000
Chitral	4,000	80,000
Pudukottai	1,179	401,000
Cambay	392	88,000
Janjira	379	110,000
Sitamau	279	35,000
Jhabua	1,336	145,000
Bharwani	1,718	141,000
Alirajpur	836	102,000
Panna	2,596	212,000
Samthar	178	33,000
Chhatapur	1,130	161,000
Charkhari	880	120,000
Bijawar	973	116,000
Baoni	121	19,000
Ajaigarh	802	86,000
Rajgarh	962	135,000
Narsingarh	734	114,000

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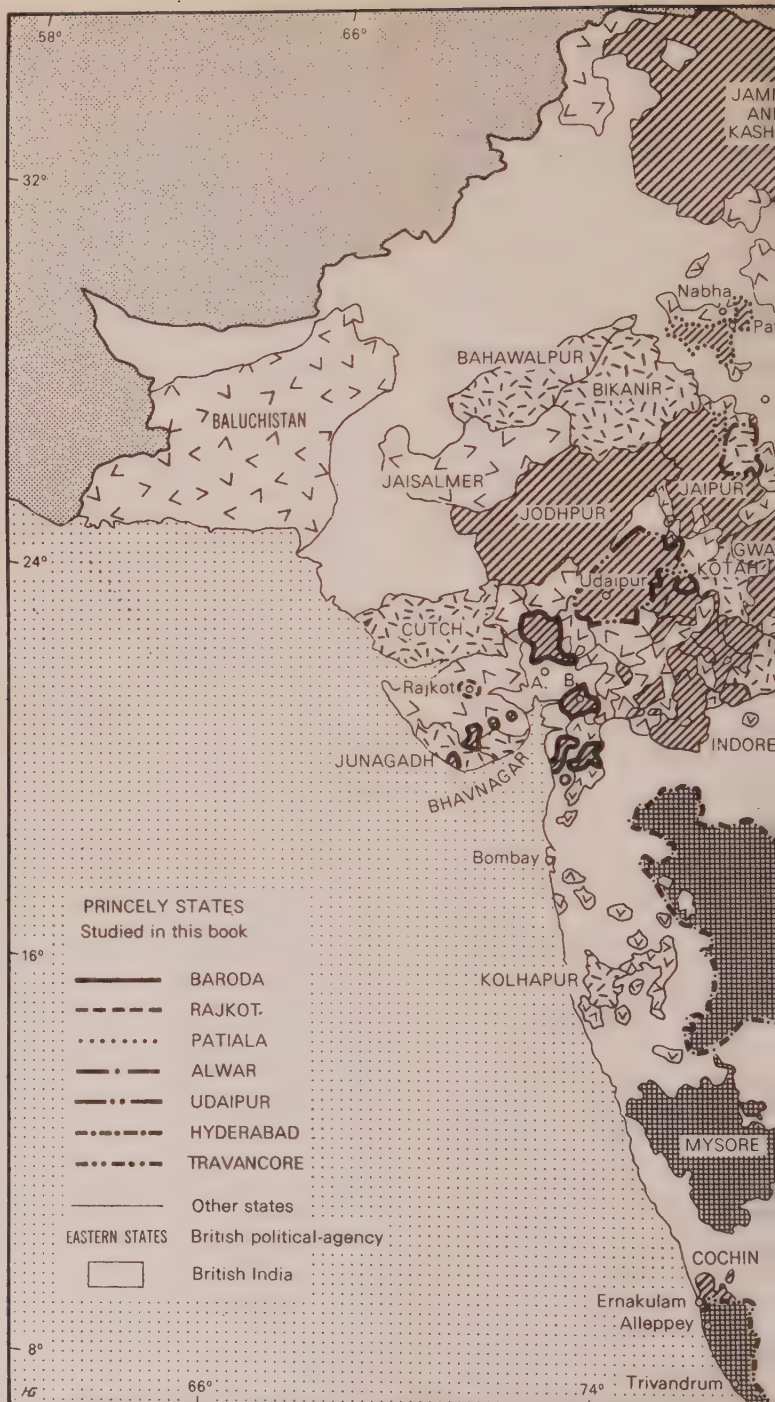
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