



ANNAS THREE

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PRINCISTAN

Imperialism's NEST for Tomorrow

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Preface

PRINCISTAN—the land over which the 584 puppet Princes of British imperialism rule—runs right across India, from Kashmir right in the north to Travancore and Cochin in the south, from the Kathiawar States in the west to Manipur in the east.

Over forty-five per cent of Indian territory, over ninety-three millions of our people, the Princes have their grip.

What brought into existence these anachronisms, against which runs the “whole argument of history”, to which “the temper of the Indian people cannot submit”? (Statement of the Standing Committee of the All-India States’ Peoples’ Conference, June 1939.)

In the first years of British rule, British policy was aimed at setting up a uniform political and administrative system, at putting a drastic end to the dirty conglomeration of feudal systems, varying in their decrepit structures, which prevailed all over the country.

British policy in the first half of the nineteenth century was unashamed swallowing of every feudal State on to which it could lay its hands, under any pretext whatsoever.

Why then was this policy changed? Why then did imperialism make a right-about-turn and instead of gobbling up the States, go out of its way to prop them up at all costs, when it was obvious that they were rotten and putrifying symbols of a dead order?

The reason lay in the Revolt of 1857.

Even before 1857, astute British administrators like Sir William Sleeman were warning the British rulers that “the annexation of Oudh would cost the British power more than the value of ten such kingdoms, and would inevitably lead to a mutiny of sepoys.”

Already they were putting forward the new thesis that the States should be regarded as “breakwaters”, since “when they are all swept away, we shall be left to the mercy of our native army, which may not always be sufficiently under our control.”

But these warnings were not heeded till the actual experience of 1857.

From then on it became British policy to preserve the States as the “breakwaters” which could protect British imperial rule.

In 1858 Queen Victoria’s proclamation declared:

“We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of the Native Princes as our own.”

Later, Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy, referring to the Royal Titles Bill of 1876, by which Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India, as marking the beginning of “a new policy by virtue of which the Crown of England should henceforth be identified with the hopes, the aspirations, the sympathies and the interests of a powerful native aristocracy.”

Thus it has remained since then an axiom of British imperialist policy in India to retain the Indian States as “royal instruments” (to use the words of Lord Canning, who was Governor-General in 1860) “without political power” in order to continue to “exist in India as long as our naval supremacy is maintained.”

The nightmare of oppression which prevails in Princistan is thus a direct result of this policy and has always been maintained with the help of British arms.

At every stage, at which the national movement has raised a new threat to imperialism and taken a new stride towards freedom, imperialism has jockeyed the Princes into a new position.

With the first Civil Disobedience Movement, imperialism set up the Chamber of Princes.

The Princes were the key to the Federal Constitution of the Act of 1935. The Princes were given over two-fifths of the seats in the Upper House, and one-third of the representation in the Lower House.

Lord Reading, in the parliamentary debate, made no bones about it, and said in plain words:

“If the Princes come into a Federation of all India... there will always be a steady influence... There will be approximately 33 per cent of the Princes who will be members of the Legislature with 40 per cent in the Upper Chamber. There are of course large bodies of Indians who do not take the view of the Congress. So that with that influence in the federated Legislature, I am not afraid in the slightest degree of anything that may happen, even if Congress managed to get the largest proportion of votes.”

The Cripps Offer had the Princes also at its core as imperialism’s safeguard. The Congress’ reasons for rejecting the offer had at their head the continued use of Princistan and the Princes to block the path to freedom.

The Cabinet Mission Plan has also Princistan as its crux. The 93 seats in the Constituent Assembly which the Plan gave

Strategic Needs Of The British

Professor Coupland, the architect of the British Plan, in his notorious book, "The Constitutional Problem in India," discusses in detail the proposal for the retention of the British-Princes treaty system, after British India has come under "the new regime."

He states quite frankly what this treaty system would mean in the new international conditions of today:

"The Princes, it may be supposed, would be satisfied with a relatively small British ground force if a detachment of the Royal Air Force were also stationed in the States. Nor would such an arrangement seem undesirable on the British side from a purely military point of view. A group of aerodromes, occupied by British airmen, in the heart of India, would accord with the strategic needs of the British Commonwealth."

Cabinet Mission's Assurance

The Cabinet Mission itself was at pains to say (in its Memorandum to the Chamber of Princes, dated May 22, 1946):

"There was no intention on the part of the Crown to initiate any change in relationship with the Crown or the rights guaranteed by their treaties and engagements without their consent." After the Attlee Declaration of

February 20, 1947, the Nawab of Bhopal declared:

"Once more I am glad to say that a pronouncement has been formally made that Paramountcy will disappear when Great Britain withdraws itself from the Indian Administrative scene, and that the States will resume their independence."

It was exactly this "independence" of the States which was envisaged also in the Cripps Offer and in which the Congress rightly saw "a perpetual menace" to the freedom of India.

Although the Cripps Offer was rejected in 1942, imperialist preparations nevertheless began for the "independence" of the States and their eventual use as a "network of friendly fortresses", as "enclaves" for "foreign authority" and "foreign troops."

Full advantage was taken of the war not merely to increase the size and the efficiency of the till-now weak and slipshod State armies, but to build new aerodromes, ammunition factories, etc., in the States.

The examples of the major States of Kashmir and Hyderabad will show what exactly this war-expansion meant:

● The British had for years specially "leased" from the Maharaja of Kashmir the frontier area of Gilgit, which borders on Tadjikistan in Soviet Asia. Here a special garrison of British, Indian and local troops "guarded" the frontier.

During the war, however, Gilgit grew from a secluded mountain garrison to a real military base with its own aerodrome, with a first-class military road connecting it with the rest of India—a perfect springboard for an offensive against the Soviet Union.

Srinagar, Kashmir's capital, also developed its aerodrome from a mere playground, on which the Maharaja's joy-plane carried out its antics, into a first-rate military aerodrome, a convenient rear-base for Gilgit, AND a base to keep a grip on both the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province.

● Hyderabad developed a war army of ONE LAKH. A Bren-gun factory was built in Hyderabad territory. The British-leased Cantonment of Secunderabad grew bigger and bigger. New military camps and stations began to shoot up in other parts of Hyderabad. Kamareddi, sixty miles from Hyderabad on the way to Manmad, became the centre for the biggest concentration of British artillery ever seen in India.

A similar "advance" was made

in every one of the States, during the war.

The "contribution" made by the Princes to the war-effort was no small "contribution"—but its real value lay not in the immediate effect it had on the outcome of the war, but on the use that could be made of this "contribution" in the future "Free" India.

On September 26, 1946, Commander-in-Chief Auchinleck, addressing a Conference of over twenty States' representatives and military advisers, asked them "to convey to their Rulers his most sincere thanks for the help given by the States during the war."

"The States", declared Auchinleck, "never failed to respond . . . They were always ready and often help was forthcoming even before it was asked."

What greater tribute could the Princes desire!

But the war is over; the Princes' "contribution" has been made.

And so to the post-war period—the period of the Cabinet Mission Plan.

I. Military Plans

IN the very same Conference of States' military advisers mentioned above, Auchinleck got down to the present and the future double-quick, after patting the Princes on the back, for their war effort.

The agenda of the Conference

was, according to reliable sources:

- * The bringing up-to-date of all States forces.
- * The assistance of British officers in this task.
- * The building of aerodromes and gun and ammunition factories in the States.

* The question of ports for States bordering on the sea.

* Railways which could carry troops from these ports right into the interior.

Similar conferences have continued to be held, and their decisions are being rapidly implemented.

ACE British military officers are in command of the forces in most of the important States:

● A Major-General Scott led the Dogra Army, which has fired and shot at the Kashmiri people all these months since the arrest of Sheikh Abdulla.

● In Hyderabad, special British officers have been training the Nizam's Army. Some of these officers have been actually directing and participating in the terror-raids on the villages of Telengana, which have been fighting so resolutely against their serf conditions during the last six months.

● In Kolhapur, where the State Army was seen in action during the recent movement, a Colonel Blythe is in command.

In every one of the States, the armies are being modernised. Important States, such as Hyderabad, are retaining their war-

armies, and not demobilising them to peace-time level.

The Jam Sahib of Nawanagar has bought twenty Dakota aeroplanes ostensibly to transport FISH, but quite clearly to form his own State airfleet.

But, of course, the key military task being carried out in the States is NOT the building up of the State armies.

Pandit Nehru rightly pointed out to Pressmen at the time of the July 1946 meeting of the Standing Committee of the All-India States Peoples' Conference that:

"The fundamental problem is that of the British power supporting these States. No local State army can carry on independently against the rest of India." (Hindu, July 11).

And the REAL British military plans for the States recognise exactly this reality. While, of course, modernising and strengthening the States' forces—for they will play a vital auxiliary role in their plans for the future—British attention is focused hard on building aerodromes, ports, railways, munition factories, bases—which can be used by BRITISH troops under special "treaties" with the Princes.

2. Aerodromes

A VAST network of aerodromes all over the States has been set up. New air services have been launched with the specific object of linking up the whole of Princistan.

In HYDERABAD, wartime temporary aerodromes are being made permanent. The Deccan Airways, a new concern floated by the State, is running a regular service between Hyderabad and Bangalore (in Mysore State) and proposes to establish a direct line from Hyderabad to Delhi and Calcutta.

In January, Group Captain S. O. Tudor, "representative of the Society of British Aircraft Constructors", visited Hyderabad to "see whether the British Aircraft industry could be of any help in carrying out the schemes of development of civil aviation, which the Hyderabad Government had on hand."

The "sports-loving" Maharaja of JAIPUR is organising an all-Rajputana airways to knit up all the scattered States in that vast territory into one solid phalanx—into one front against nationalist India.

Even the till-now backward State of JAISALMER is to have an aerodrome. The old, orthodox Ruler's resistance to the proposal to have anything to do with a modern business like an aerodrome was overcome by offering him a marriage alliance with the State of Jodhpur.

It is said that the Maharaja of Bikaner who fixed up the alliance "explained" to Jaisalmer that Jodhpur was fond of flying

and so—an aerodrome was NECESSARY!

In KATHIAWAR also, the task of converting old aerodromes into first-class military ones and of building new aerodromes is being carried out with a vigour all its own.

In CUTCH, there is an excellent aerodrome at Bhuj, which is connected by a regular service with Bombay and Delhi. Facilities for night-landing have been recently introduced.

JAMNAGAR is the biggest airport in Kathiawar. In October, the Air Services of India Ltd., launched a service linking Jamnagar and Porbunder with Bombay, Karachi, Ahmedabad and Delhi.

PORBUNDER and BHAVNAGAR also have first-class aerodromes.

An old and scarcely used aerodrome at RAJKOT has been rebuilt while JUNAGADH is making plans for building one in the near future. On January 20, an air service between Rajkot and Bombay, known as the Ambika Air Service, was inaugurated by the Resident.

I have already referred to KASHMIR's aerodromes in Srinagar and Gilgit. Parachute practice was carried out by British troops in the month of September at Killenmarg near the tourist resort of Gulmarg.

This is just a glimpse of some of the aerodromes and air-services which are springing up like mushrooms all over Princistan.

3. Ports, Railways

OF equal interest and importance are the schemes for the development of ports in the States. The Ports Technical Committee, set up by the Government of India, published an 80-page report on September 29, 1946. Its chief recommendations were for the development of FOUR ports: Sika, Veraval, Bhatkal, Vizagapatam.

SIKA is in the State of Jamnagar.

VERAVAL is in the State of Junagadh.

BHATKAL, at present in Bombay Presidency, is claimed by Mysore.

VIZAGAPATAM, at present in Madras Presidency, is claimed by Hyderabad.

The Committee also called for an engineering report on the proposal to develop the port of VIZHINJAM in Travancore.

It is important to note in this connection two facts, which disclose clearly the real purpose of this sudden love for the development of our ports which the British appear to have acquired:

War Transport Officer At Head

1) The Chairman of the Committee was a prominent officer of the War Transport Department of the Government of India. (the important word here is WAR).

2) One of the considerations which governed the Committee, according to its report, was, "The strategic importance of India in the development of world order in the Far East."

To add to this proof of the imperialist reasons behind the frantic port-development in the Indian States, here are extracts from a private letter written on December 9, 1945, by the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar to Sir (then Mr.) Eric Conran Smith, who was then Secretary to the Government of India in the War Transport Department.

"For some time past, I had in mind the development of our port facilities. . . . The paucity of modern port facilities on this side for naval and commercial purposes was greatly felt during the war and resulted in undue congestion in Bombay and Karachi."

And so, the Jam Sahib continued, here are the plans: a report by a British engineer (by name Bennett), who made a survey; an index map showing the exact location of the site and the project, the construction of which is in the hands of another BRITISHER (by name Dunbar), just released from the Royal Engineers. And finally the Jam Sahib assured Conran Smith:

"Responsible BRITISH firms have been consulted for the design of the jetty; and negotiations are in progress with an ENGLISH firm for its construction."

"In The Interests Of The Empire"

A thoroughly BRITISH port!

And if that did not satisfy Conran Smith, the Jam Sahib added, so that there should be no mistake about his proposal:

"I am thoroughly convinced that this port will not only be in the interests of my State, but in the best interests of the development of Indo-British trade, and not least of all, in the interests of the Empire in times of emergency, which God forbid, may not arise."

Apart from these ports recommended by the Ports Technical Committee for development, other proposals for modernising and even acquiring ports for the States continue:

- * Two ports in Bhavnagar, which under the treaty with Britain, were not to be opened up and developed, are now with the active assistance of the British, being enlarged and built up.
- * Jamnagar has a naval school, started during the war, where naval cadets are being trained.
- * Cochin similarly has a naval school.
- * The American magazine Newsweek reported in August that the Nizam's Government "have concocted a plan to acquire Goa from Portugal, giving Hyderabad an outlet to the sea."
- * Hyderabad is never tired of claiming for itself the ports

of Masulipatam and Vizagapatam, while Mysore lays claim to Bhatkal.

Extension Of The Railway System

The Ports Technical Committee also suggested the extension of the railway system to feed these ports. In practice, of course, this meant an increase in the roads in the States, which would thus be useful for British military and economic purposes.

But apart from the Technical Committee's recommendation, many other proposals for expansion of the rail and road system in the State are being carried out.

In Kathiawar, a broad-gauge railway line is being laid from Sika to Viramgam and on through Kathiawar to Karachi. All four State railways which link up Kathiawar have important schemes for expansion. An Inter-State Road Building Committee in Kathiawar, inactive for years, has been revived. An asphalt road is planned, linking Ahmedabad with Sika, Sika with Veraval.

Highway From Karachi To Baluchistan

Last month, an API message, declared that:

"A national highway linking Karachi with Baluchistan is being surveyed by the Military Engineers Services in co-ordination with the North Western Railway authorities. The

latter are also conducting a survey for a direct Karachi-Quetta railway line.

"The military survey parties have been on their jobs for more than three months.

"Both projects when completed will materially benefit Baluchistan State, particularly Kalat and Las Bela providing that hilly country with the

4. Economic Bases

BUT British imperialism is preparing to use the States not merely as their military bases, but also as their economic strongholds.

After the latest Attlee Declaration of February 20, in the debate on India in the House of Lords, the Conservative leader, Viscount Templewood, referred to the Princes (who "have always come to the aid of the Empire in the hour of the Empire's need") and complained that today their "liberty of action was restricted in many important sections—for instance in the matter of CUSTOMS and the amount of ARMED FORCES they might maintain."

The Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence replied:

"... A State or a body of States, seeing that transfer of power is going to take place, may want to discuss with the British Government some va-

much-needed rail and road communications."

When one reads this news-item in conjunction with the recent declaration of the Khan of Kalat that he will now be "free" and demanding back the territory "leased" by him to the British (which includes the areas round Quetta, Bostan, Nushki and Nasirabad)—then its real meaning becomes clear.

riation of the present conditions (that is, the restrictions regarding customs and armed forces.—R.C.).

"I think it is sensible and I think no exception can be taken to it."

When further pressed by the Tories to disclose how exactly power would be transferred to the States, the Secretary of State pleaded hard that they should not embarrass him by too close a "cross-examination" and trust him to do all that was necessary to safeguard the future of the Princes and the Empire.

Pethick-Lawrence begged not to be asked to say anything more as "India was listening to every word" that was being spoken there!

Of the "restrictions" on the maintenance of military forces, enough has already been said above.

The second key question which Lord Templewood posed was that of "customs". What did it mean?

Dumping Grounds For British Goods

Simply this—that the States should be permitted to go out of the Indian Customs' Union in order to enable Britain to dump her goods freely in the States through the rapidly developing ports!

Side by side, Britain is busy pouring capital into the States.

H. S. Malik, Prime Minister of Patiala, and leader of Indian States' Industrial Delegation to the United Kingdom, stated:

"What we feel is that when you get an industrialist from England or America and he has a stake in industry here—whatever it is, 30 or 40 per cent—he will be definitely interested in the success of that industry.

"I do not see how you can expect the whole-hearted collaboration of skilled, experienced and advanced industrialists, unless you are prepared to trust them to that extent." (*Times of India*, January, 17, 1942).

Maqbul Mahmood, Secretary of the Chamber of Princes, in an article in the *Asiatic Review* wrote:

"There is also much scope for Indo-British partnership in the

industrial development of the States."

Already this Indo-British partnership has begun on a vast scale in the States.

The Hyderabad Trade Delegation which visited the United Kingdom last summer:

"Placed orders for capital goods, largely machinery for textile and hydro-electrical projects to the extent of Rs. 82,000,000...."

"One private concern in Hyderabad, negotiating through a member of the Mission, has successfully concluded an agreement by which the largest manufacturers of textile machinery undertake to instal a full plant for the manufacture of textile machinery in Hyderabad. The firm in question is Lansil of Manchester, a group of ten other manufacturing firms.

"By this agreement, the Manchester firm has undertaken to provide equipments, blue prints and drawings, supply high grade key technicians and also arrange for the training of the Indian personnel. And in the erection of another cellulose acetate rayon factory in Hyderabad the Indian personnel will be taught the Lansil spinning process." (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, January 15).

The latest information from Hyderabad reveals the announcement of the Godavari Valley Project. It is proposed to build up hydro-electric works, iron and steel works, textile

factories. "A new Tatanagar, a new Manchester" is how the project is officially described. Forty to seventy per cent of the capital is British.

Travancore's Own Trade Commissioner

The Travancore State has appointed its own Trade Commissioner in London. Recently the news that Travancore had sold all rights for the development of its rich thorium sands to a

British firm caused countrywide consternation, owing to the importance of thorium in connection with atomic energy research. But a large proportion of Travancore's industry is already in British hands.

Similar Indo-British deals are being sought in other States.

The British are striving hard to dig in more and more into the Indian States—to use them as dumping grounds both for their goods and their capital.

5. "Independence"

THE latest news from London (in an IPA message, March 25) revealed the following interesting facts:

- Representatives of certain Indian States in London "are exploring the possibilities of employing British troops in States' services" and "are also contacting ranking unofficial Americans intimate with the U.S. Army Headquarters."

- There are "strong rumours that Britain and America (along with Australia) would also like to make arrangements with certain Indian coast-line States with a view to future co-operation with Commonwealth defence."

The London Daily Graphic wrote simultaneously:

"British troops will not necessarily evacuate the whole of India in June 1948.... The Maharaja of Kashmir for instance, may decide to retain a

strong British garrison in his State."

That all these reports are not mere moonshine is apparent not only from the unchallengeable facts of British military and economic preparations in the States outlined above, but also from the rapid chorus of voices rising from the States, claiming "independence."

Khan Of Kalat Wants To Be "Free"

- The Khan of Kalat claims "independence."

- The Nizam of Hyderabad's spokesman announces that as soon as Paramountcy ends, Hyderabad will be a "free" Kingdom and:

"As a kingdom, Hyderabad will naturally establish relations, economic, political and

cultural not only with the rest of India—but with other foreign countries as well."

On March 25, Nawab Mir Nawaz Jung Bahadur was appointed Hyderabad's first Agent-General in the United Kingdom, obviously "independently" of Pandit Nehru's Foreign Department.

- On March 26, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Diwan of Travancore, claimed HIS State's "independence", and declared:

"Regarding the question of the future defence of India in general and of his State in particular....he would be ready to come to a common agreement with her neighbours in India, and would not hesitate to reach agreements even with foreign countries, if necessary in the interests of the States' security." (Free Press Journal, March 3).

The British and their puppet Princes are getting the last details into position before the final "treaties are signed with the "free" States.

A Net Work Of Loyal Fortresses

Princistan remains the "network of loyal fortresses", as Rushbrook Williams called it in 1930, the "enclave" for "foreign authority" and "foreign troops", as the Congress called it in 1942.

From Princistan, Britain will continue to rule India militarily and economically. From Princistan, Anglo - American imperialism will continue to use Indian soil as its base to dominate Asia and to plot for its Third World War.

Princistan is imperialism's Nest For Tomorrow.