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British Diplomacy in Kashmir

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Abstract: *The British diplomacy for securing their interests in Kashmir, during the pre- independence period between 1925 and 1946, is closely connected with the Kashmiri Muslim agitation of 1931- one complementing the other. It is story of how, behind a facade of moral obligation of carrying the “white man’s burden” the British practiced intrigue in fuelling the fire and creating a situation that left the Maharaja with no option subject no doubt but a challenging task never –the- less.*

The main challenge to research on this period was posed by the central and state government’s general ban on consultation of unpublished official records pertaining to Kashmir from 1925 on words. Fortunately the ban does not apply to some micro-filmed crown representative records acquired by the national Archives of India from India house library, London. There are also microfilmed private papers of the viceroys of the period, acquired by the Nehru memorial museum and library at New Delhi, the access to which is free. All these put together provided a fair amount of authentic material to form the base of the study. However, the paucity of the material to form, and the facts that the British officials in India have, quite understandably, left no direct evidence of the inner motives or intrigue, the story has had to be constructed on the basis of inferences; necessitating, at times, the attributions of big interpretations, but small facts.

KeyWords: *Commencement, Recalcitrant, Huns, Turmoil’s, Hostilities, Deviousness, Sterling, Glaringly, Stipendiars, Dreamt, Pox, Legitimate, Accumulate and Grasp.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Kashmir is perhaps the only region of India which has, thanks to Kalhana’s famous Rajatarangni is connected history of its own dating from the 7th century A.D. it is known that Kashmir was a part of the empire of Ashok. After the commencement of the christen era the valley was invaded by the tartars. In the 6th century A.D. came the white Huns and later the valley then came under the sway of Hindu Kings. Dynastic revolutions followed and with the propagations of Islam the valley passed in to the hands of Muslim rulers. With the advent of the Mughal rule in India, Kashmir passed under their rule in 1586. Later, with the weakening of the Mughal power, Ahmad shah Abdali wrested Kashmir from them and thus commenced the afghan rule. Although earlier to this Kashmir has passed through May a vicissitude of good and bad governments, the Afghan rule was coloured with persecution and tyranny never before witnessed here. In 1819 a section of the persecuted people appealed to Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab to come to their rescue. Consequently the Sikhs invaded Kashmir and with the defeat of the afghan governor, the afghan rule was replaced by Sikhs. And with the defeat of the afghan governor, the afghan rule was replaced by Sikhs.

While Kashmir was passing through these turmoil’s, Jammu was the witnessing the phenomenal rise of Raja Gulab Singh, the man destined to bring Jammu and Kashmir together politically. Gulab Singh was the descendent of the princely house which ruled our Jammu till the annexation of this principality, along with other neighbouring smaller ones, by the Sikhs government of Lahore in 1808. He joined Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s service in about 1809, and soon distinguished himself, both as a soldier as well as an administrator, to such an extent that maharaja made himself the Raja of Jammu in 1820. Thereupon Gulab Singh, with the concurrence of the Lahore Darbar, entered up on a –policy of expanding the frontier of the little state. He first annexed one after the other, all the principalities around Jammu. By annexing territory lying north of Jammu and south of Kashmir, and with the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan, Gulab Singh had, by 1840, enveloped Kashmir with his territories from the north, south and east. It was probably because of this the Gulab Singh remained associated with the affairs of Kashmir even while it was under the Sikh Governor. In 1841, when a revolt took place against the Sikh Governor, he went to sent Kashmir by the Durbar to deal with it. His success against the rebels enabled him to appoint a governor of his choice in Kashmir; to have a greater say in Kashmir affair for next few years before he finally became its maharaja. These few intervening years were, however, to be a great trial and tribulation for raja Gulab Singh, as we shall presently see.

In the various battles between the British and the Sikhs that followed, the Sikhs fight bravely but they were handicapped not only by lack of good leadership but also by the treachery of Lal Singh and Tej Singh who it appears were working for the destruction of the army, which they had began to dread. On the instance of the army, Gulab Singh was once again asked to take over as the prime Minister; more for negotiating peace than containing the war. Consequently Gulab Singh reaches Lahore on 27 January 1846. By

then the war had definitely gone against the against the Sikhs but the British had also suffered heavy in men and material and they were not in any way less keep to end hostilities than their worthy adversary . They appreciated that a protracted war would go against their interests and “truly felt that to subjugate Punjab in one season was a task difficult of achievement and full of imminent risks”. In Gulab Singh they saw not only a commander who with his skill and capacity could prolong the war but also an able man under whose direction the Sikh could place their valour and unanimity to put up stiffer resistance and even perhaps to reverse the trend of the war. Never—the—less they could not end the war till the Sikhs were pushed back across the Sutlej. So the war continued even as negotiations were going on.

One of the provisions of the treaty of Lahore was that 1, 50,000 sterling were to be paid by the Sikhs to the British as war indemnity. Immediately after the treaty was signed Lal Singh once again got himself elevated to the post of prime minister and in an attempt to dispossess Raja Gulab Singh of his territories he offered to transfer Kashmir and Jammu (including Ladakh and Baltistan) to the British in lieu of the war indemnity. Raja Gulab Singh who had earlier during the course of the negotiations spurned the British offer of making him an independent ruler of his hill territories, was now compelled , As a matter of self preservation, to himself ask the British for this favour in consideration for having negotiated a speedily peace. The British were only too happy to do something for one who might have “rendered himself formidable in a day, by joining the remains of the Sikh forces and opening his treasures and arsenals to the war like population” even that at late stage, after he had reached Lahore. They remained the annexed from which they had suffered at the sudden exposure of their vulnerability when in a veiled threat during the talks at Kasur, Gulab Singh had said that “the way to carry on a war with the English was to leave war with the sturdy infantry entrenched and watched, and to sweep open country with cavalry to the gate of Delhi. They therefore, had reason for feeling grateful to one whom, though capable of executing his implied threat, had not infarct done so. Coincidentally what was most agreeable to raja Gulab Singh was also of much political and military advantage to the British, which made it convenient for them to appease the raja. By the treaty of Amritsar 1846 Gulab Singh was granted independent possession of not only his territories of Jammu, Ladakh and Baltistan but also that of Kashmir in consideration of a payment of rupees 75 lakh, the reduced amount of the war indemnity due from the Lahore durbar. This, besides fulfilling Gulab Singh’s lifelong ambition, helped the British in further reducing the power and importance of the maharaja of Punjab. Gulab Singh was formally with the title of Maraja at Amritsar on 15 marches 1846 when the new state Jammu and Kashmir being.

II. ADVENT OF HARI SINGH’S RULE

Maharaja Hari Singh has been associated with the affairs of a state long before he actually ascended the ‘Gaddi’ on the death of his uncle maharaja Pratap Singh. In 1915, after completing his education at Mayo College Ajmer, he becomes the commander in chief of the state forces. In 1921 he became the senior member of the state council in addition to being the commander in chief. He utilised this opportunity in establishing contact with the people and in understanding their problem and difficulties. As a matter of fact, he had already won their confidence by his zealous efforts to solve the food problem during the scarcity conditions in 1921—22. No doubt it was the intelligent handling of the situation that averted, what could have been, a severe famine in the valley.

In 1927 the term state subject was redefined to give it a much wider and effective meaning. As a matter of fact it was in 1922 that, at the instances of Hari Singh, who was then the senior member of the council, a committee was appointed to define the term hereditary state subject, so that practical shape to the policy of manning the state administration with nature born subject of the state, could be given. The committee had reported that the term should be held “mean and include all persons born and residing within the state before the commencement of maharaja Gulab Singhs rule and those settled down therein before the commencement of 1942 (1885 A.D) and have been since permanently residing therein.” This definition was now fully accepted and, in January 1927, orders were issued that none who was not a hereditary state subject would be appointed to posts under the government without the express permission of the ruler.

In order to secure proper supply of trained state subjects for the superior branches of the state services, the maharaja constituted a scholarship selection board with a grant of Rs 100,000/- per annum to select scholars for special training in British India and European countries. A convention was subsequently established that the scholarship be divided between Hindu and Muslims on a fifty-fifty basis; probably on representations from Muslims that they could not complete with the educationally more advanced Hindus. Consequently many Muslims along with hindus stipendiars, received training in law, civil engineering and training in co-operative work and accountancy outside the state in the British India with a view to bring them up to the level of the more advanced Hindus.

Besides, non-hereditary state subjects were here after debarred from acquiring any immoveable property in the state or selling it to one other than a hereditary state subject.

A department of civil supplies was established with the object of assisting local enterprises. Standing instructions were issued that preference be accorded to indigenous products. In matters of contracts it was decreed that state subjects be given preference over others even if "other things being equal the bid of the latter is five percent more favourably". In another fact of favouring the state subject it was laid down that only the sons of the soil could be the share holders and directors of the semi-state bank (the Jammu and Kashmir bank) that was being established about them.

A number of progressive laws were enacted by Maharaja Hari Singh within the first few years of his rule. In 1928 the infant marriages prevention regulation, making vaccination against small pox compulsory the incidence of the disease was reported to have been brought down considerably as a result of this regulation.

Other messages of reform were the enactment of Hindu widow's re-marriage and suppression of immoral traffic in women regulations. The latter must have been particularly beneficial to Kashmiri Muslims whose poorer women folk often fell prey to the lust of the pleasure seeking tourists.

Female infanticide among Rajputs, which was the result of their abject poverty, was ended by law. As an inducement, the poor among the Rajputs were given grants of financial aid at the time of the marriage of their daughters.

Maharaja Hari Singh was basically a secularist. At the time of his raj tilak he had declared that "I am a Hindu but as a ruler over my people my only religion is justice" and unlike his ilk, Hari Singh's dislike of flattery almost bordered on hatred. His government contained eminent men without any consideration of religion. Even in his private life he hardly differentiated between the Hindus and Muslims. Many of his close friends and members of his personal staff are known to have been Muslims. The state administrations even though inadequately represented by the Muslims, for reasons of their educational backwardness, could not be termed Hindu. In 1931, for instance of the five ministers two were Muslims, two Hindus and one European. Among the high court judges, the chief justice was a Parsi of great renown and of the others one was a Hindu and other a civil administration as well as the army.

III. BRITISH DISENCHANTMENT

Evidently Maharaja Hari Singh's rule was of flying start and the British who had been watching the affairs of the state, for reasons of their own, with very keen interest, did not fail to take note of Hari Singh's qualities as a ruler. As mentioned that some personal and confidential letters exchanged between the viceroy of India and the secretary of the state for India, London, speak of Maharaja Hari Singh's administration as being of a high standard generally, judged by such standards as were applicable as Maharaja himself "devoting undeniable ability and energy to the welfare of his subjects".

The viceroy's good opinion about the Maharaja though based mostly on the reports of Mr. Howell, the British resident in Kashmir, was also the result of his personal knowledge of Hari Singh. This is quite evident from his comments on the criticisms of Hari Singh made by the resident in his report to the viceroy. Referring to the two adverse remarks made by the resident, first, that "Highness though capable of generosity is vindictive and is apt to allow an ancient grudge or a hereditary antagonism to cloud his judgement" and second that "His highness shows a growing tendency towards extravagance, specially on pomp's and ceremonies and his personal apparatus of aggrandisement" the viceroy in a letter to the secretary of the state considered it necessary to "qualify somewhat the impressions that Howells comments would be themselves leave" it was not that what Howell had said was not true, but because the viceroy that "other things are true too". He went on to say that he himself had seen a good deal of Hari Singh lately and that he has always got on well with him. Infact he had "never found him in small or big things unreasonable or out to take an advantage". He praised Hari Singh's work in the standing committee and considered him as a "definite acquisition to the chamber of princes". In an obvious reference to the strained relations between the resident and the Maharaja of the viceroy felt that "the side of him that Howell dwells is due principally to the recollections of past associations with the residency".

It is surprising but true that the viceroy was quite used to asking the Indian princes for "favours" that were not always in keeping with rules and regulations nor, for that matter, morally correct. Such favours were, of course, not personal but primarily for serving British interests in India. We have already seen how they persisted in asking the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir to do something in Colonel Wards case which they should have known was wrong. In 1930 when civil disobedience movement was in full swing the viceroy asked the Maharaja to monetarily favour one Mr RS Sharma Chief, MLA, Editor of the Bangalee just because he was, through his newspaper, espousing the British case. The viceroy must have felt terribly humiliated on receiving from the Maharaja, in reply to his request, another sermon on good governance to explain his inability to pay any subsidy to Mr. Sharma. The Maharaja's letter makes interesting reading and is reproduced below:

“You Excellencies letter for introduction, dated the 28th June 1930 favouring Mr. R A Sharma CIE, MLA, and Editor to Bangalee newspaper, has been delivered to me. I regard with much regret that I have been unable to help Mr. Sharma to the extent that he desired, because on principle I have always set my face against subsidising any newspaper on any account whatever so. it also becomes necessary not to have it placed on the list of newspapers to which our advertisement are sent....I feel certain your Excellency will agree with my views and forgive my not having been able to do more for Mr. Sharma”.

Indeed it was not only in the matters relating to such “favours” that maharaja Hari Singh was rubbing the British on the wrong side. Bigger issues were involved too, the prime one being Gilgit. We have seen that the British were worried about how the new maharaja would view the existing arrangements in Gilgit. It may be recalled that the area of the Gilgit frontier was then divided under two categories of administration. One, the settled area of Gilgit wazarat ruled directly by the maharaja and second, the Gilgit agency under the control of the British political agent. The worst British fears came out true when immediately on assuming relationship Maharaja Hari Singh started pressing for the abolition of the agency and restoration of its control to the state. This was totally unacceptable to the British because, apparently, the Russian threat in the region had not diminished in any way since the panjdeh affair in 1885.

IV. MUSLIM DISCONTENT

What Maharaja Hari Singh had done for his subjects, discontent among the Muslims began to surface within the first few years of his rule. So much so that in 1931 the maharaja had to face a violent agitation by his Kashmiri Muslim subjects, apparently aimed at overthrowing his rule. The greatest detractors of the Dogra rule in Kashmir having themselves admitted that the measures taken by the maharaja during the early years of his rule were just and his conduct nobles, one wonders what made the Kashmiri Muslims so hostile towards the maharaja within this short period of his rule. The supporters of the agitation would have us believe that within a few years of his rule the Maharaja managed transform himself, from the good ruler that he was during the “earlier years”, into ease-loving and pleasure-seeking despot, least interested in the affairs of the state during the “latter years” before the agitation.

V. MUSLIM LEAGUE INTEREST

For the year 1931 the relations between the Hindu and the Muslims in the British India had been anything but cordial. One reason, probably, was the educational backwardness of the Muslims and their consequent economic inferiority to the Hindus. The main reason, however, was the spread of the idea of Muslim nationalism as opposed to Indian Nationalism. Unfortunately, the British, who were quick to grasp the potentialities of the situation, exploited the strained Hindu-Muslim relations to strengthen their hold over India. A policy of “divide and rule” was initiated by them which did not allow the two communities to come together in spite of the efforts of some well-meaning Indians.

The first seeds of hatred between the two communities were sown by Mr. Beck, principal of the Anglo-Oriental College Aligarh in 1893 when he organised the Mohammedan defence association with the object of preventing the Muslim from joining Indian national congress; advocating loyalty to the government, and Anglo-Muslim collaborations. This “Englishman engaged in empire building activities in far off land” is believed to have played an important part in alienating the bulk of the Muslims from the Hindus; his greatest contribution being the emancipation of the two nation theory and the conversations of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, from the great Indian Nationalist that he was during his earlier years.

The Gulf created by Beck widened with the passage of time. In 1906 was established the All India Muslim League with a view to “support, wherever possible, all measures emanating from the government” and “to protect the cause and advance the interest” of the Muslims throughout the country and “to controvert the growing influence of the so called Indian national congress, which had tendency to misinterpret and subvert British rule in India. So in 1909 while the Hindus opposed communal representation and separate electorates as introduced under the Minto-Morley reforms, the Muslim worked for its implementation. In fact, hatred between the two communities had by 1930 developed to such an extent that any small matter was sufficient to cause an outbreak of open hostilities.

As it is, repercussions of the communal situation in India were bound to be felt in Kashmir, but the All India Muslim League was not to allow such a course to take its own time. Kashmir, with such a preponderance of Muslim population, ruled by a Hindu maharaja provided an ideal hunting ground for its communal activities and it could not afford to forego the chance for the exploitation of the situation. The Muslim League started taking interest in Kashmir in good earnest from the start of the twenties. It had just then suffered an eclipse; the lime light having been stolen by the Indian national congress after its non-cooperation movement in 1920.

Ironically, however, the khalifat movement which the congress had incorporated in its non cooperation movement to win over Muslim support also give birth to pan-Islamism and, consequently, a new lease of life had been granted to the Muslim league. No better cause than a struggle against the Hindu Maharaja's "tyranny" over his Muslim subjects was there to win the Muslims into the fold of the Muslims league. Consequently a social organisation Anjuman-a-kashmiri Musلمان-i-punjab was converted into the all Indian Kashmiri conference in 1920, to take up the cause of the Kashmiri Muslims. Sir Mohammad Iqbal visited Kashmir in July 1921 and, thereafter, became emotionally involved in Kashmiri politics. He began uses his poetic powers in highlighting the "sufferings "and "misery" of the kashmiri Muslims to excite their passion against the Hindu maharaja. Some members of the association also start publication of news papers devoted to the cause of social uplift of the Muslim, but later in 1926 a weekly named kashmiri, published from Lahore, took it up itself to so seeds of discontent against the Dogra raj, even as maharaja Hari Singh, was announcing boon after boon for his subjects .as kashmiri publicity board was also set up to highlight the "sufferings "of the kashmiri Muslims under the Dogra rule. The idea of Islamising Kashmir was thus gradually and painstakingly nourished. So much, so that within a short period, while the state was going through the "early years" of Hari Singh's good rule. The Muslims has been sufficiently aroused to even purpose in 1928 that kashmiri might be handed over the Afghans, (who by all accounts had perpetrated the worst form of repression that the Kashmiris had ever known), to save the Muslims from the "tyranny" of the Hindu rule . This created an impression among the Hindus that it was not the "sufferings" of the Kashmiri people but the Hindu rule that the Panjabi Muslims were exercised about.

The national congress had also refused to associate itself with the agitation. Of course, initially it had been the policy of the congress not to interfere in the affairs of the state; first, because their hands were full with problems in british-india and also Indian ruler enjoying a certain amount of autonomy and such so many potential cells of resistance to British power. But, by now, it had been realised that the people of the states had to be drawn into the nationalist movement against the British .the states people's conference had been formed to look after the interests of the people of the states so as not to let them get alienated from the national main stream. In the case of Kashmir, however, even the states peoples conference did not considered the cause of the people agitating against the maharaja as worth taking up. Shri Ramayana Chattering did not as much as mention Kashmir in his presidential address to the third secession of the states peoples conference in June 1931 when the situation in Kashmir was about to explode .as a matter of fact Mahatma Gandhi asked congress men not to interfere in the affairs of the state. As a result of this, nationalist Muslims in the Punjab immediately withdrew their support to the agitation in Kashmir. The congress evidently suspected the sincerity of purpose behind the agitation. The Anglo- Muslim conspiracy against the maharaja of Kashmir must have been glaringly evident to many contemporary Indians.

The attitude of Indian national congress is explained though its mouth piece, the Amieit bazaar patrika. In a contemporary on the "kashmiri day" organised by the all-Indian Kashmir committee, it doubted the aim of the agitation being composed of rank communalists out to create serious unrest in the state. Referring to the grievances of the Muslims, as published by the "Foreign Secretary" of the Ahmedia community, the paper asked if most of these grievances were not found in some of the Muslim states as well as in British India. It was of the view that if the grievances were genuine there were for better methods of redressing them than resort to agitation in its present form. It went on the suspect the intensions of the British Indian Muslims as they had taken up the cause of only one community and against the chief of one state. Writing again on 15August the paper concluded that the agitation was Hindi-work of communal Muslim malcontents led by Maulana Shaukat Ali, who, not being satisfied by string trouble in british-india, had invaded the Hindu state of Kashmir apparently with a view to complete the hegemony of the Muslim states in northern India as dreamt by the sir Mohammad iqbal. Yet in another editorial while admitting that conditions in Kashmir were not ideal, it pointed out that nor were they ideal in british-india or the states ruled by Muslim princes. In its view the "game" was "for deeper" than could be "perceived at first sight". clarifying what was being termed as it support to the maharaja (in an obvious reference to the objections raised by some nationalist Muslims led by Dr. Ansari) , the paper in an editorial on 26 August 1931, explained that it had at no time, supported autocracy but had only decried the sincerity of purpose behind the agitation. Why only Kashmiri it asked. Why not all the states?

VI. MUSLIM GRIEVANCES

Whatever may have been the inner-motives of the British Indian Muslims or the Muslim leadership in Kashmir, in starting an agitation in Kashmir, outwardly they claimed to be fighting for their grievances against the Maharajas rule. This is not to deny the existences of grievances. Grievances the people did have, as they would have any governmental .it is only that analyses of the grievances would show that many of them were either unreasonable or of a trivial nature. At least, one pertaining the lake of religious freedom was non-existent, which had been made up just arouse the masses into action. The important ones, on the other

hand, were of a type that could not have been remedied over-night. It also could not be established that the maharaja was against looking into the genuine demands to his Muslim subjects which forced them into taking recourse to violent agitation. Even the resident had to admit to the viceroy that the "Maharaja was determined to meet legitimate demand of the Muslims" and yet the submission of the Muslim demands formed the last act of the drama; at the end of the agitation. Clearly grievances, even those that could be considered legitimate, rather than being the primary cause of the agitation, were in fact used by the Muslim leaders to fan the flames of unrest that had its sources elsewhere. This contention is also supported by the fact that the reading room party that had taken up by the Muslim cause had to formulate their grievances before the agitation. In fact, they were unable to reduce their grievances on paper even after they had fought the first round with the government. The grievances discussed in succeeding paragraphs are once that were often voiced by the Muslim leaders from time to time and the one that came up for the special treatment by the various writers who wrote about the Kashmir's "glorious fight for freedom", after Indian independence.

VII. THE BRITISH INVOLVEMENT

Through the declared British policy towards the Indian princely states was that of non-interference in their internal affairs, in actual practice it does not seem to have been ever so. The responsibility for the "general soundness of their states administration" that the imperial council had assumed while guaranteeing the internal independence of the princely states and affording them protection against external aggression, provided the British ample scope for intervention in the internal affairs of the states. In fact, under the pretext that the government (the general policy of non-intervention notwithstanding) would not "consent to incur the reproach of being indirect instrument of misrule" they could intervene in the affairs of any state at any time. After all it was the viceroy himself who was to decide whether a state was well-ruled or mis-ruled. He could, therefore, at any time give the dog a bad name and hang him.

The scope for British intervention in the internal affairs of the states was further enlarged when in 1926 Lord Reading declared that it was the right and duty of British government "to preserve peace and good order" within the states. This together with the Indian princes protection against disaffection Act of 1922, under which the government of India took on obligation of taking action against those engaged in anti-states activity directed from British India, gave the British Indian authorities unlimited scope for manipulating intervention even while swearing by the general policy of non-intervention. By assuming the twin responsibility of protecting the states and their rulers, the British could side with or the other depending on where their own interests lay.

Interestingly, while the British continued to justify intervention in the affairs of the states under the pretence of self imposed moral obligations like "bringing the blessings of civilisation to the subjects of Indian rulers" history of their relations with Indian states, right from the beginning, is replete with examples where they have served purely selfish interests through intervention; any benefits accruing to the people or their ruler there from being incidental.

This particular characteristic of British policy, where by self-interest was pursued under cover of high sounding moral obligations, is perhaps been explained by what Lord Wedgwood had to say (though not in this context) with regard to a peculiar trait to his race. The British, he wrote "had a strong feeling of national pride and a desire for prestige taking (either) a more dignified form of the white man's burden or the more vulgar form..... of sheer lust for domination". It appears that while for a common Englishman his strong feelings of national pride and a desire for prestige took the dignified form, the policies of the British colonial governments were, more often than not, dictated by sheer lust for domination. It was, perhaps, because the English men generally would not accept the use of foul and under hand means, that their government were compelled to use coatings to cover up their deeds, (aimed at promoting self-interest), which might have otherwise put the proud nation to shame. So while Pitt's Indian Act 1784 contained a preamble with a noble declaration that any scheme of conquest and extension of dominating in India was "repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this (British) nation" Lord Wellesley proudly announced in 1800 that he would "heap kingdoms upon kingdoms, victory upon victory, revenue upon revenue" and accumulate "glory and wealth and power until the ambitions and advice even of his masters shall cry mercy". The subsequent British Indian rulers may not have been as candid and outspoken as Wellesley but none could ever boast of a policy where in moral consideration outweighed national interests.

In the case of Kashmir in 1931, British interest clearly lay on the side of agitators. As noted that Maharaja Hari Singh's relations with the British were not too cordial. His insistence on the restoration of Gilgit to the state, his pro-congress leanings, and his general unservient attitude bordering on being anti-British, were a source of annoyance to the British India government. The long rope that they seem to have given to the maharaja was probably due, first, to the awareness that Hari Singh was, otherwise, ruling his state well and, second, the impression carried by Lord Irwin that the Maharaja's attitude was the result of some sort of a complex from which he was suffering which could be cured with a show of tolerance and bestowal of honours and authority on him to give

him necessary poise". However, as the Maharaja continued to press hard over the issue of Gilgit and persisted in his recalcitrant ways, the British cup of patience seems to have been full by 1930 and action against him was very much called for.

VIII. KASHMIR UNDER BRITISH RULE

Immediately after the maharajas surrounded to the British, they began to induct their officers into state service for gaining complete control over its administration. As it is, with a appointment of lieutenant colonel EJD Colvin as the prime minister and three other British nominees taking over as ministers for Home, revenue and finance, the entire administration could be considered to begin run under direct orders of the government of India. But the British did not stop at that Mr CV Salisbury was appointed administrator of Jammu and Mr Lawther was brought in to take over as the inspector general of police in the state in the replacement of lieutenant colonel Gandhrab Singh. Mr Amir Singh of the Punjab police was inducted into the state police as a deputy inspector general.

IX. CONCLUSION

To conclude it thus, while promotion of national interests has always formed the main basis of any British policy, their strong sense of national pride and the desires of prestige and acclaim has, led them to achieve their objectives through diplomacy rather than by the use of force. This has been so with the dealings with the princely states of India over which they exercised undisputed Paramountcy during the raj. Indeed the history of British princely states is full of examples where the paramount power has patiently pursued normal means of diplomacy in the attainment of its political objectives. It has, however, always been a lot of persuasion, a very little of compromise and full use of the threat of intervention. Added to these were, in some appreciable measures, hypocrisy, deviousness, and even dishonesty, (the age of associates diplomacy even though not outwardly recognise as such), if only to provide egoistic and self-elating cover to purely selfish motives.

Kashmir occupied the most strategic position in this area. Something was to be done with regard to Kashmir as well. The opportunity came with the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Punjab. The British diplomacy resulted in the destruction of the Sikhs and finally in the annexation of the Punjab by them. At the same time in 1846, they created a new state of jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh partly as a reward for Gulab Singh for his treacherous role in the Anglo- Sikhs conflict, but particularly in accordance' with an intended policy of checking foreign aggression. Obviously the British used the Maharaja to further their imperialistic designs and policies.

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