BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS JAMMU & KASHMIR (1846-1947)

ABSTRACT

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

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IN

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BY

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

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Abstract

The thesis attempts to revisit the British policy towards Jammu and Kashmir and to bring out the unexplored aspects of British Indian relations with the state. The study spans over a century and a year; that is from 1846—when as a result of the joint endeavour of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu and the British East India Company the state came into being—to 1947, when the state got divided between the two successor states of British Indian Empire: India and Pakistan. Intriguingly, it was during the period of the British territorial expansion that this princely state was created in the extreme north of India. What were the real motives behind handing over Kashmir to Gulab Singh, what was the legal status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir vis-à-vis the British Indian Empire, and how the regime was used by the British to strengthen their imperial position in India form the central theme of this thesis.

The creation of Jammu and Kashmir State, closely followed by the uprising of 1857 and the subsequent Queen’s declaration protecting the territorial rights of Indian princes, granted it protection from complete merger in British India but short of that the British established complete sway on its internal and external affairs. The Treaty of Amritsar, which was instrumental in the creation of the state, had granted a somewhat “special status” to the state by giving it in the “independent possession” of Raja Gulab Singh, so far as its internal affairs were concerned. Notwithstanding that guarantee, we see the state was not only reduced
to the position of any other princely state of India but in effect witnessed more interest and intervention in its affairs because of its geopolitical and strategic importance as a frontline state. As the state assumed an important position in the security of the British Empire from the emerging Russian threat and since the defence from foreign threat was the responsibility of the British themselves, it provided them a convenient excuse to intervene in the affairs of the state. While the treaty only provided the broader framework for conducting the relations, the actual policy towards the state flowed, to a significant degree, from the geopolitical and strategic considerations of the English East India Company ever alert to the dangers on the north-western frontier to its expanding Indian dominion.

The study focuses on the processes and policies which were involved in the stationing of Resident in the state. The state did not have a Resident imposed on it until as late as 1885 and after that he did indeed become an instrument of colonial interference within the state. The appointment of the Resident is considered to be a major stroke of British policy towards Jammu and Kashmir. The British Indian government secured firm grip over Kashmir administration by divesting Maharaja Pratap Singh of his powers in 1889. While the Maharaja’s powers were partially restored to him in 1905, the full restoration was made only in 1924. Although the British intervention was essentially intended to fulfill their imperialistic designs, the policy makers adopted the pretence of being the guardians of the people of the state. One of the spin-offs of the intervention was that the state-led land and
educational reforms created a milieu in which the people of the state launched educational and political reform movements. It also brought the princely state and the people into closer contact with the ideologies prevalent in British India at the turn of the twentieth century.

British imperial policy towards the state of Jammu and Kashmir in the late 19th century was guided primarily by the fear of a Russian advance towards India through the Pamir mountains. In addition, the British were continually troubled by the independent policy adopted by the Amir of Afghanistan, whose lands also extended as far as the north-western frontier of the sub-continent. On account of its strategic location, the state of Jammu and Kashmir appeared to be a sort of buffer against potential incursions particularly from Russia and Afghanistan into the sub-continent. Provided the British could maintain a workable alliance with the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, they would not be obliged to incur the expense of fortifying the northern frontier themselves. With this end in view, the British decided to support the Kashmir Darbar in stabilizing its influence in the northern tracts of Dardistan, in return of a British Agent to be stationed at Gilgit with the purpose of securing the north-western frontiers of their Indian Empire. Gilgit was considered as “a watch tower to the defence of the Indian Empire” and the Agent who remained stationed there till the British withdrew from Indian subcontinent as “a sentry at a vulnerable point of the India frontier”. The establishment of the British Residency and the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh resulted in a firmer
British control over the administrative affairs of Jammu and Kashmir which in turn helped them to use Kashmir as a frontline state more effectively without any opposition from its government. Interestingly, Jammu and Kashmir not only acted as a frontline state but was made to bear, willingly or unwillingly, the large part of the cost of defence of British Indian Empire.
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To my Ammi

Fatma

Who uncomplainingly bore my distance from her and
Who has been a quiet pillar of strength for me

To my Abbu

Ghulam Nabi

For instilling in me the value of time, hard work and love of books
And who taught me to live with positive attitude
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Map 1. Stages in the creation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir
(Source: Alastair Lamb, Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846-1990)
Introduction

The Government of India Act of 1935 defines a princely state or an Indian State as, "...any territory, whether described as a State, an Estate, a Jagir or otherwise, belonging to or under the suzerainty of a Ruler who is under the suzerainty of His Majesty and not being a part of British India". In a more comprehensive sense a state was considered to be, "a political community, occupying a territory in India of defined boundaries, and subject to a common and responsible ruler who had actually enjoyed and exercised, as belonging to him in his own right duly exercised by the supreme authority of the British Government, any of the functions and attributes of internal sovereignty."

The princely states came into being as a result of the treaties which were signed with, or were forced on the Indian rulers, who already existed or came into being in the process of the expansion of the British Indian Empire. By the second decade of the nineteenth century virtually all the major "country powers" had been linked to the East India Company by treaties. What is more, the essential elements of British "paramountcy"—the system of Residents at the princely courts, the regulation of successions, and control over the states' foreign affairs—were all laid down in this period. As the British raj grew more secure and strong, the Company officials argued to extinct the remaining states on the ground that they fell short of the British "civilizational standards". Had the subsequent events, especially the revolt of 1857, not intervened, the remaining states would probably have suffered the same fate as befell Satara, Jhansi, Nagpur, Awadh and Punjab. Pondering over the different dimensions of the revolt, it became clear to the

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British officialdom that it was their aggressive policy of territorial expansion that had turned a number of powerful princes into bitter enemies of the raj and it were they who played a prominent role in the rebellion. However, the princely states as a body proved remarkably helpful for the British to crush the revolt. So the princes were in a way the cause of the revolt as well as the agents of its suppression. This made the British realize the importance of harnessing the surviving Indian princes to meet any future eventuality. This realization called for a change of British policy towards the princely order. The policy of outright annexation gave way to value the states as imperial clients and they were incorporated into the imperial framework as collaborators. In this changed scenario, the princely states enjoyed the protection of a paramount colonial power which came in the form of Queen's Proclamation of 1858.

The princes have generally been dubbed as vicious, bejeweled loafers, as unremitting despots, devoid of any common sense of politics and diplomacy. Though the princes in their own right were highly polished people, yet having been virtually caught between the devil and the deep sea they became objects of ridicule from both sides. However, a close examination of the princely order makes it amply clear that the vast majority of the princes, who occupied the throne during the colonial India were, by and large, a decent lot and usually kept a finger on the pulse of the changing events around them. So the princes who became junior partners in the British Indian Empire were far from being puppets under the control of the British; they were, in fact, significant actors on the Indian political stage. An anecdote of Maharaja Ranbir Singh in which he explains his strategic and important position in the British imperial scheme is a case in point here. Explaining the critical importance of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in the British
Indian Empire, he once narrated to William Digby, a bitter critic of the British imperial policies—especially in Jammu and Kashmir, that, “Sahib, what do you call that little thing between the railway carriages? It is like button stuck on a sort of gigantic needle that runs through the train, and when the carriages are pushed at one end or the other you hear a ‘houff’, ‘houff,’ and bang they go against the poor little button. I felt very sorry for the poor little button, but it is doubtless useful in its way. What do you call it?” Digby replied that it was called ‘a buffer.’ “Buffer, buffer,” replied the Maharaja in earnest tones. “Yes, buffer, that’s just what I am, and that shall henceforth be one of my titles.” “Never mind”, goes Maharaja further explaining his position in the British imperial scheme in India, “it is all the same, I am a buffer; on one side there is a big train of the British possessions, and whenever they push northward they will tilt up against me; then on the other side is the shaky concern of Afghanistan, and on the other side of it is the ponderous train and engine called Roos. Every now and then there is a tilting of Roos towards Afghanistan, and simultaneously there is tilting upward of the great engine in Calcutta, and I am the poor little button between them. Someday, perhaps not far distant, there will be a tilting from the North, and Afghanistan will smash up. Then there will be a tremendous tilt from the South, and I shall be buried in the wreck and lost!”

The grace and dignity they once enjoyed was because of the power they wielded and the sovereignty they enjoyed but having come under British supremacy they were purged of their military power and rendered incapable of making wars. It greatly limited not only their sovereignty but also sphere of activity. Further, guaranteeing them

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protection from any external threat and the immunity from internal revolts transformed the Indian rulers into tyrants.

Intriguingly, it was during the period of the British territorial expansion that the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was created in the extreme north of India. What were the real motives behind handing over Kashmir to Gulab Singh, what was the legal status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir vis-à-vis the British Indian Empire, and how the regime was used by the British to strengthen their imperial position in India form the central theme of this thesis.

A great deal has been written on the relationship between the British Indian government and the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. But most of the works are either a simple narration of events or a partisan or politically motivated evaluation. Most of the writers have discussed the manifestation of British policy rather than delving deep into the actual reasons for British intervention in Kashmir. N.N. Raina, the author of the book *Kashmir Politics and Imperialist Manoeuvres 1846-1947*, who had the distinction of personally taking part in the events which unfolded on the political firmament of Jammu and Kashmir in twentieth century, though claiming to have written an impartial account of the British political maneuvering “not coloured by passion of the moment or blind prejudice”, has nevertheless studied the British policy towards Jammu and Kashmir with a specific bent of mind. The events and facts presented in the work have been placed in such a manner so as to justify the ideology the author represents. As a result, the author has tended to produce largely partisan work which fails to convince the serious students of history. The other work entitled *Kashmir in Transition, 1885-1893* by D.K. Ghose merits particular attention because of the definite perspective which the book has
underlined. The book covers the critical years in which the British policy in Kashmir saw both its application and climax. The author has presented the British intervention as a specific historical development brought about in the wake of the creation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This work is more explicit—the author had the advantage of access to extensive archival material, and provides more facts regarding the British policy towards Kashmir. Ghose, though, a brilliant writer, deliberately and systematically attempts to justify the British intervention in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The author’s contention that the British Indian government, acting as a paramount power in Kashmir, had every right to interfere is erroneous and unhistorical. The major theme of British Policy towards Kashmir (1846-1921) by F.M. Hassnain is the discussion of the approach of the British policy-makers towards Jammu and Kashmir in the backdrop of their relations with Russia. The book, wittingly or unwittingly, seems more interested in highlighting the positive impact of the British intervention in Jammu and Kashmir. The account given by Madhavi Yasin in British Paramountcy in Kashmir 1876-1894 fails to add anything substantial to what has been given in the accounts discussed earlier. The book also suffers from the defect of incomplete referencing.

Having analyzed the vast academic literature that has been produced on the Anglo-Kashmir relations, it becomes clear that these writings have left much to be desired. In view of these facts an attempt is made to revisit the British policy towards Jammu and Kashmir and try to bring out the unexplored aspects of British Indian relation with the state. The study will cover a century and a year; that is from 1846—when as a result of the joint endeavour of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu and the British East India Company the state came into being—to 1947, when the state got divided between the two
successor states of British Indian Empire: India and Pakistan. While the structure adopted for this thesis, as the nature of the work demands, is broadly chronological, a thematic framework is also given so that the events are put in their proper perspective. The study attempts to discuss the complexities of the relationship between the British colonial power and the Dogra Darbar. The major focus of this study is on the search of British imperialists' quest for a 'scientific frontier', and in this process how Kashmir was used as a 'buffer' against the Afghans and the perceived Russian threat. The stationing of Resident in the state is considered as a major stroke of British intervention which had far reaching consequences on the overall development of future events. The state did not have a Resident imposed on it until as late as 1885 and after that he did indeed become an instrument of colonial interference within the state. Although the British intervention was essentially intended to fulfill their imperialistic designs, the policy makers adopted the pretence of being the guardians of the people of the state. One of the spinoffs of the intervention was that the state-led land and educational reforms created a milieu in which the people of the state launched educational and other political reform movements. People came into close contact with the ideologies and movements prevalent in British India at the turn of the twentieth century.

In preparation of this thesis, source material has been largely drawn from various archives and libraries. Voluminous records available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, particularly, Foreign Department Records, Foreign and Political Department Records, and Home Department Records, have been extensively used. Government documents preserved in Jammu Repository of Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, especially, Old English Records, Political Department Records, General Department
Records, and Proceedings of the State Council of Jammu and Kashmir have been consulted to get a clear idea about the Anglo-Kashmir relations during the period covered by this study. Furthermore, the Ex-Governor’s Records and some other valuable files were accessed from the Srinagar repository of Jammu and Kashmir State Archives. Some rare and crucial manuscripts dealing with the Dogra rule in Jammu and Kashmir, which are deposited available with the Government of Jammu and Kashmir’s Research and Publication Department at Srinagar, have also been tapped in order to build a strong argument. However, an effort has been made to make very cautious use of these official documents. With the purpose of writing a balanced history, they have been cross-checked with the other available contemporary sources such as, the travelogues, memoirs, biographies, and private and secret letters written by different British officials to their families, friends and the higher authorities in India and abroad. As may be expected from an autocratic regime, the fact that the people would have lived a life of subjection and misery, needs no explanation. It may, nevertheless, be noted that the majority of sources pertaining to this period were written by Europeans and the accounts given by them, although not wholly wrong, do appear exaggerated. They appear to have suffered from prejudice against the Dogra rule. Also, it seems that the motive of the earlier writings was to induce British intervention in the state while that of the later writings to justify that intervention.

Having said this, however, it is always a big challenge to research on Jammu and Kashmir from 1925 onwards, due to the undeclared ban imposed by the central and state government on the consultation of unpublished official records dealing with Kashmir.
With the existing restrictions on the primary sources related to this period, much reliance has to be made on the secondary sources which create problems in objectivity.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one tries to explore how the princely India, which played significant role in the expansion and consolidation of British colonial power, came into being. It goes on to explain the British policy which was pursued in specific circumstances towards the princely India keeping in view the best imperialist designs. Specifically, the chapter discusses the British policy of cultivating and politicizing the Indian princes to counter the challenge of nationalism which had taken the shape of mass agitation with the dawn of twentieth century. The concluding part of the chapter analyzes how and why the princely order ultimately succumbed to the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent.

Chapter two gives a historical background of the territories of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, and the processes and procedures which were involved in cobbling together of these disparate territories by the English East India Company and Raja Gulab Singh to bring into being the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. An attempt to highlight the polemic that followed the creation of this state is made to draw a conclusion regarding the handing over of Kashmir to Gulab Singh. It demonstrates the distinctive characteristics of the newly founded state. The chapter also discusses the strategic importance the state acquired for the British colonial power.

Chapter three discusses the legal aspect of Anglo-Kashmir relations. It examines in detail the provisions of the Treaty of Amritsar in an attempt to indicate how far the British interference, which progressively increased throughout the period, was warranted
by the provisions of the treaty. It argues that the treaty was not just an instrument for the creation of the state but determined the status of the two parties vis-a-vis each other. The provisions of the treaty remained relevant throughout the period even if they were invoked more in violation than in observance. The chapter demonstrates that the treaty continued to serve as a frame of reference, whenever there was a controversy and disagreement between the two parties.

Chapter four investigates how far the changing geo-political scenario in the critical north-western frontier—the defeat of the Sikhs in the Second Anglo-Sikh war (1849), the mal-administration of the Kashmir Darbar and the British failure in the Afghan war of 1878—prepared the ground for the direct British intervention in Jammu and Kashmir. The intervention manifested itself in the establishment of the British Residency in 1885 and, in a more aggressive form, the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1889. This brought Jammu and Kashmir under the virtual British control. The chapter explains how the British intervened primarily to secure their imperialistic motives, but they presented themselves in the guise of benevolent power. This “benevolence” indeed resulted in some positive changes in the state; it exposed the “medieval” socio-politico-economic and administrative structures of the state to somewhat “improved” British colonial structures.

Chapter five focuses on the Russian advances towards the southern and eastern regions of Asia by mid-nineteenth century, the deteriorating relations with the Amir of Afghanistan and the territorial contiguity with China which persuaded the British colonial power to take serious note of the defense of the northern frontier. This resulted in the establishment of the Gilgit Agency by the British, considered as “a watch tower to the
defence of the Indian Empire", that remained in operation till 1947 when the Indian subcontinent was decolonized.

The question that how far the appointment of the Resident and removing the Maharaja from the throne cleared the way for the colonial authorities to implement their comprehensive defence scheme without any opposition from the Kashmir Darbar has also been explored in this chapter.
Chapter One

Indian Princes and the British Paramountcy

The “native states”1 or “princely States”, as they were referred to, represented a unique system of polity that had developed in India, partly as a result of policy and partly as a result of historical accident. The princely States of India and their relations with the British Government offer no parallel or analogy to any institution known to history. It was neither feudal nor federal, though in some aspects it showed similarities to both. It was not an international system, though the principal States in India were bound to the British Government by solemn treaties and were spoken of in official documents as allies. Nor would it be correct to consider it a political confederacy in which the major partner had assumed special rights, because it was admitted by all parties that the constituent States had no rights of succession. So a polity so curious and so unique deserves to be studied and analyzed scientifically.

To study the position and nature of the princely States is of special interest. It raises so many questions in regard to the nature of sovereignty, the basis of law, and the position of judiciary in subordinate States, that an examination of the subject in all its aspects would illuminate almost every side of political theory. Nowhere had the division of sovereign attributes been carried to such an extent. The Indian States included among them every variety of political community ranging from “full-powered sovereign States”.

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1 Many writers, including Indians, prefer the expression "princely States" to "Native States" of India. A probable reason for this preference is that during the British rule the word "native" was often used as a "smear word" in both the British official and non-official vocabulary.
like Hyderabad or Gwalior, whose rulers enjoyed legally “unrestricted powers”\(^2\) of life and death over their subjects, and who made, promulgated and enforced their laws and maintained their own armies, to small chieftainships who were confined within their own palaces. They varied in size and importance too—from Jammu and Kashmir, which was bigger than France and Hyderabad, and had a population of 12,000,000,\(^3\) to little States in Kathiawad which consisted of a few acres of land. They were scattered all over, from Jammu and Kashmir in the extreme north touching Central Asia and the Pamirs to Travancore in the extreme south. Though the rulers of the bigger States were subordinate to the Government of India, their laws were supreme in their own States, and there was no appeal from their courts even to the Privy Council.\(^4\)

Time and again, at critical junctures, the princes showed themselves as loyal and useful friends of the Raj. In the Revolt of 1857, during the anti-partition agitation of 1905, in the war crisis of 1914 and 1939, and during the Quit India movement of 1942, princely money, princely forces and princely charismatic authority lent vital material and moral support to the imperial cause. Conversely, no other group of Indians was so consistently and generously feted by the British. Their services were recognized with land grants and special honour.

The political relationship between the British and the States had deep roots. From the occasion of its first intervention in Arcot against the French (1750-54), to the battle of Buxar (1764), the British East India Company stood in relation to the Mughal


\(^4\) Lord Chelmsford’s Speech quoted by K.M. Panikkar, *Relations of Indian States with the Government of India*, p. xix.
Empire in position of subordination. With the victory at the battle of Buxar and the consequent fall of Nawab Shuja-u-Daula of Awadh, the Company got the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. From the time of the acquisition of Dewani to the end of Warren Hastings' tenure (1784), it got engaged in a life-and-death struggle, first with Mysore and then with the Marathas with the object of establishing an equality of status with the Indian powers.

When Lord Cornwallis succeeded to the Governor Generalship, the Company had attained the position of equality with the Indian powers. The main States at that time in India were the Marathas of central and western India, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Nawab of Arcot and the Sultan of Mysore. The British maintained relations of a friendly character with the Marathas—who ruled almost whole of central and western India, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the Nawab of Arcot; while with Mysore their relations were merely proper but hardly friendly.

The relative position of the States vis-à-vis the Company continued to be the same until the arrival of the Marquis of Wellesley. But among themselves their power and authority had undergone considerable change. The Nizam was reduced to impotence after the fatal field of Kurdla in 1795, where his army capitulated to the Marathas. In the Maratha Empire itself, the balance of power had altered. The central authority of the Peshwa had weakened. Mysore remained under Tipu, but that redoubtable Sultan’s power

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5 Dewani means the right to collect the revenue. The Company after defeating the tripartite alliance of Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh, Shah Alam-II, the fugitive ruler of Mughal Empire, and Mir Qasim of Bengal in the battle of Buxar on 22 October, 1764, got the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Owing to the grant of Dewani and the reorganization of its political administration by the intervention of British Parliament through various Acts, the Company increased in authority and prestige.
was very greatly reduced. Scindia alone remained a power of first class military importance in Western India and the forces of Holkar held Central India.

The East India Company finally defeated Tipu Sultan of Mysore in 1799. The position of Hyderabad state was also made subordinate when the Nizam was made to sign a subsidiary treaty in 1800.\(^6\)

With the Marquis of Hastings a new period opened in the relations of Indian States with the East India Company. The supremacy of English arms proved itself on every side. The large blocks of vaguely defined territory were broken up. Scores of States were added to the Company's protectorate. Though the Company had won in war, it was necessary for the peace of its own territories that neighboring powers should not fight each other on its borders; it assumed the right to arbitrate in disputes of princely States and deprived them of the right to make war. Rulers now signed treaties with the Company not as equals making arrangements of mutual benefit, but as subordinates who would cooperate with the Company in return for its "protection". This "protection" extended at that time only to the external affairs of the States.

\(^6\) Under the 'subsidiary system', the Company forced on the States a subsidiary force which was to be maintained by the States. The subsidiary force besides demoralizing the administration also provided the Company the opportunity to force the States to give away the portions of their territories to the Company. It was usually postulated that the subsidy (which formed generally about one third of the revenues of the States) should be paid annually. The Company's Government knew well enough that so heavy a demand on the States' revenues could not easily be met with any regularity especially in India, where revenues shrink or expand according to the monsoon. The result was, as the Duke of Wellington foresaw, that the States fell into arrears. This gave the Company opportunity to annex the most valuable portions of the territory of its allies. The principle on which the commutation of subsidy was generally negotiated is put in the following words by the Marquis of Wellesley himself, "In commutation of 40 lakhs a country rated at the annual value of 62 lakhs of rupees was taken away in full sovereignty in the Nizam's case." Wellesley's Despatch to the Secret Committee of the Board of Directors, quoted in C.L. Tupper, Our Indian Protectorate. (London: 1898), pp. 40–1.
When Lord Hastings left India in 1823, the broad outline of what came to be known as princely or Indian India, in contrast to British India, had been defined on British maps. There were three great blocks of what were called native States' territories. The largest one was the massive conglomeration of Rajput- and Maratha-ruled States, which spread from Gujarat in the west through Rajasthan to Malwa and Rewa in central India. This broad band included the States and estates of Saurashtra; the deserts of Rajasthan with Rajput rulers and large populations of aboriginal tribal groups; northern central India with the small States of Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand; and the Maratha holdings of the northern Deccan. In the east there was Maratha-ruled Nagpur and the Orissan States, constituting the Tributary Mahals of Chota Nagpur. In the south, Hyderabad and Mysore dominated the interior, with Travancore and Cochin on the southwestern coast. There was also the outlying group of smaller States north of Delhi, the Cis-Sutlej States of Punjab and some Rajput-ruled States in the Himalayan foothills. The British were nevertheless anxious to control most coastal tracts, the hinterland of their major entrepots, and economically productive area such as the Gangetic plains.7

The Government of India pursued, in several marked periods of spectacular aggression followed by periods of hesitation and rest, a policy of enlarging the empire by annexing princely States. The Court of Directors in 1841 enunciated the policy of 'abandoning no just and honourable accession of territory or revenue as may from time to time present.'8 Lord Dalhousie carried this theory into practice with such a determination that 'he changed the map (of India) with speed and thoroughness no campaign had

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8 Ibid., pp. 145-6.
equaled'. With the result, Awadh, Satara, Nagpur, Tanjore and numerous other States were annexed and became part of the territories of the Company. The additions he made to the British territory in India increased its revenue by four millions and a half sterling and its area by districts equal to Russia in Europe.

Thus by the second decade of the nineteenth century virtually all the major 'country powers' had been linked to the company by treaties. What is more, the essential elements of British paramountcy—the system of residents at the princely courts, the regulation of successions, and control over the States' foreign affairs—were all laid down in this period. Indeed, by the 1850s, the only big question that still remained to be settled in regard to the States was how many ought to be left intact. As the British Raj grew more secure, and as the philosophies of evangelicalism and utilitarianism cast their spell, officials who had once cautiously advocated keeping a "ring fence" of friendly States around the company's territories, now argued forcefully for their extinction on the grounds that native rule—"oriental despotism"—fell short of the "standards of the civilizations" to which the people of India were entitled. If events had not intervened, the remaining States would probably have suffered the same fate as befell Satara, Jhansi, Nagpur, Awadh and the Punjab between 1848-1856—absorbed into the expanding Indian empire. The first of these events and, in retrospect, the critical one, was of course the Revolt of 1857 which compelled a review of every major policy of the British Indian government.

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10 The Company's Government took over the administration of Mysore in 1831, and between 1832 and 1835 annexed Cachar, Jaintia and Coorg. In February 1856, Lord Dalhousie, the predecessor of Canning in office, annexed Awadh and removed the King, Wajid Ali, from Lucknow to a suburb of Calcutta.
11 Majumdar, *British Paramountcy*, pp. 54-5.
The Revolt shocked the British officialdom with its suddenness, rapid spread and fierceness. However, it was the timely and whole-hearted support of most of the Indian princes which helped the British to carry the day. Indeed one of the significant facts of the Revolt was that the rulers generally aided the British Government, directly or indirectly, to limit and suppress the revolt. Some of the princely States, like Nepal, Hyderabad and Patiala, gave valuable military aid to the Company's Government in 1857-58. Even the passive loyalty of most of the princely rulers—because it limited the area of uprising and military action in the critical months of 1857—proved valuable to the British Government.

Once the initial shock of the revolt had passed and it became clear that the rebellion would not succeed, the Company's senior men on the spot, such as Governor General, Earl Canning, began to look more deeply and analytically into its causes. Out of this thorough examination emerged the insight that the policy of territorial expansion had turned a number of peaceable rulers into bitter enemies, and thus could be accounted, as the Board of Control President Lord Stanley of Alderley declared in a speech to parliament, a major cause of the revolt.\footnote{Thomas R. Metcalf, \textit{The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870}, (Princeton: 1965), pp. 323-4.}

Lord Canning, the Governor General wrote, “The safety of our rule is increased, not diminished, by the maintenance of Native Chiefs.” During 1857-58, “these patches of Native government”, like Hyderabad, Gwalior, Rampur and Patiala, had “served as breakwaters to the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave.” The Governor General believed that in times of threat to Britain's position in India and elsewhere, “one of [their] main-stays [would] be found in these Native States.”
further extension, but strengthening of British rule in India should be our first care", declared Canning.13 The Governor General also put forward the economic reasons for abandoning the policy of annexations. Lord Cunning stated his conviction that if the policy of annexing princely States was not abandoned, it would impose on the Government of India the burden of a very big standing army of European troops, intensify the financial crisis produced by the Revolt, and by straining the existing military, administrative and economic resources of the Government, impede efforts to develop the vast territory already under direct British rule.14

So, Lord Canning with his strong views against any aggressive policy towards the States prevailed on the India Office to insert in the Queen’s proclamation of 1st November 1858—issued to mark the transfer of the East India Company’s possessions to the crown—a pledge to ‘respect the rights, dignity and honour of the native princes as our own’.15 Thereby he ensured that in an undefined but substantial way, the fate of almost 600 royal houses in India became bound up with the reputation of the crown in England. He also succeeded in sanctioning from the Home authorities an assurance to the princes that their dynasties would not be allowed to lapse for want of natural heirs. The assurance came in the form of adoption sanads—which ‘ensured’ that the princely rule in

14 The Revolt then changed attitudes about the worth of the States as imperial clients; but it also provided, indirectly, a persuasive financial argument against further annexation. While the revolt had been suppressed, the costs had been heavy. In 1858-9 the government’s budget deficit was a whopping 14 million. By 1861, the British Government was driven to introduce income tax in a bid to raise revenue. This was clearly not the time to embark on an aggressive foreign policy which could only lead to new financial burdens on the government. Ian Copland, The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire 1917-1947. (Cambridge: 1999), p.16.
15 The amnesty proclamation, better known as the Queen’s Proclamation, was published throughout India. This proclamation contained two paragraphs addressed to Native Rulers, though the document as a whole was addressed to the Queen’s subjects in India. See, A.B. Keith, Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy. 1750-1921, (London: 1922), Vol. I, pp. 383-4.
India was safe both from the whims of nature and ambitions of over-zealous officials.\textsuperscript{16} Canning proved right. During the ninety odd years between 1858 and the British departure from the subcontinent in 1947, not one princely State lapsed—and none was annexed. While in British India provinces were created and carved up, the borders of the States stayed frozen in their post-mutiny mould. No wonder the princes in later years came to look back upon the Cunningite settlement as their Magna Carta.

The proclamation's words, 'we desire no extension of our present territorial possessions', were most striking. This was so in the context of the Company's policy since thirties of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century of annexing subordinate rulers on charges of misrule,\textsuperscript{17} and by application of the Doctrine of Lapse.\textsuperscript{18} But what the real meaning of this statement would be, or if it would prove a firm, honest statement of territorial policy, no one could foretell. But one thing is for sure that the disastrous results of the Revolt forced the

\textsuperscript{16} To scatter away 'the clouds of mistrust', the Government issued Sanads, some 140 in all to each of the principle States in India in 1860, assuring them that in case of failure of natural heirs, their adopted sons would be recognized as their successors. See, K.M. Panikkar, \textit{An Introduction to the Study of the Relation of Indian States with the Government of India}, (London: 1927), p. 57.

\textsuperscript{17} On charges of misrule against their rulers, the Company's Government took over the administration of Mysore in 1831, and between 1832 and 1835 annexed Cachar, Jaintia and Coorg. In February 1856. Lord Dalhousie, the predecessor of Canning in office, annexed Awadh and removed the King, Wajid Ali, from Lucknow to a suburb of Calcutta. One of the largest Native States (24,000 sq. miles), Awadh was the home of the bulk of the sepoys and native officers of the Company's Bengal Army, which revolted in 1857.

\textsuperscript{18} Under the Doctrine of Lapse, the Company claimed that on the death of a native ruler having no natural heir to succeed him, his State automatically 'lapsed' to the Company, the paramount power, and that such lapsed princely States could be annexed to the territory of the Company. In other words under this doctrine the Company claimed the right to withhold recognition in cases of succession by adoption from a gadi. Though according to the custom and laws of property of the Hindus since ancient times an adopted son is for all purposes of succession as good as a son born in wedlock, the supporters of the Doctrine of Lapse held that the British Government, as the paramount power, need not recognize in cases of succession to chiefships, as distinguished from succession to private property according to English ideas of property, the succession of an adopted son. This doctrine was used to annex Mandavi in 1839, Kolaba and Jalaun in 1840, Surat in 1842, Satara in 1848, Jaipur and Sambalpur in Baghat, a Cis-Sutlej territory, in 1850, Udaipur in central India in 1852, Nagpur in 1853, and Jhansi in 1854. These annexations added about 100,000 sq. miles to the British Empire within a short period of 15 years.
authorities to realize the ‘failure’ of the annexationist policy. After the Revolt, the British finally came to adopt the policy of perpetuating the princely rule.

The policy of the Government of India since the Mutiny was directed at the steady consolidation of economic interests. The period following the Mutiny saw an extraordinary development in the economic life of India. The extension of railways, the sudden demand for Indian cotton owing to the stoppage of supplies from America during the civil war and the consequent rise of Bombay as a leading industrial and commercial centre, the growth of modern banking, posts and telegraphs, etc., led to a steady and irresistible movement towards economic unification. Railways were being pushed into the interior to service the long-distance trade. The States which lay within the operation of these currents began to seem a serious obstacle to progress. The attitude of the British Indian authorities changed and the darbar expectations that the States were about to come into their own were quickly shattered. They surrendered or were forced to surrender their economic independence. In the meanwhile, the Evangelicals launched a scathing attack on the post mutiny settlement. They argued that by issuing the sanads the government had provided the princes the shield which could be used by them to perpetuate the misrule in their States. Was it right, the evangelicals asked, that some of India’s people should prosper while others languished in poverty and ignorance and suffered oppression just because they happened to be the subjects of a dependent prince? Was the British Government not morally obliged to ensure that the rulers who owed their power to the British did not abuse it? By the end of the decade, the British officials, such as Governor-General and his associates felt a need to change their attitude towards the

\[19\] The term **Darbar** stands for Royal Court.
princely States. The theory of suzerainty was put forward as a uniform principle in relation to all the States for the first time. Lord Mayo, while addressing a gathering of princes of Rajputana at Jaipur in 1870 made it clear to them that, “If we respect your rights and privileges you should also respect the rights and regard the privileges of those who are placed beneath your care. If we support you in your power, we expect in return good government.”

Thus the British Indian Government again started pursuing a forward policy. But this time they followed a different path. One way was to exploit the advent of minors as rulers in the States, and then implement “reforms” directly through British guardian-administrators. Such opportunities were relatively plentiful. Another area where the British could make the forward moves was to compel young princes entering their majority to sign legal documents which bound them to follow the advice of their Residents in all important matters, and to retain ‘reforms’ introduced during the minority period. Yet another way was to make examples of rulers who defied them. In total, some twelve ruling princes were unceremoniously removed from their thrones in the later part of nineteenth century.

Writing to a Cabinet Minister in England he said: “Our relations with our Native Feudatory States are on the whole satisfactory, though they are by no means defined. We act on the principle of non-interference, but we must constantly interpose. We allow them to keep armies for the defence of their States, but we cannot permit them to go to war. We encourage them to establish courts of Justice, but we cannot hear of their trying Europeans. We recognize them as separate sovereigns, but we daily issue to them orders which are implicitly obeyed. We depose them when the ruler commits or sanctions a grievous crime; or create an administration for them when the chief misgoverns and worries his subjects. With some we place political agents, with others we do not; with some as with Jaipur, Bhopal and Patiala, we are on terms of intimacy and friendship. Others such as Dholpur and Alwar, we scarcely ever address except to find fault with them for some gross neglect of duty.” See, W.W. Hunter, The Life of the Earl of Mayo. (London: 1876). Vol. II, pp. 207-10.

The princely States of Orissa such as; Athgarh, Baramba, Bonai, Kalahandi, Narsinghpur, Nilgiri, tana, and Talcher, remained under the minority administration for a considerable period of time.

Ian Copland, The Princes of India, p. 19.
However, questions were raised from various quarters in regard to the legal aspect of intervention. For example, Sir Owen Tudor-Burne, the Political Secretary in the India Office, thought that the government had effectively given away the right to intervene in the States by conferring adoption *sanads* on the princes in 1860-2. But his and the similar other questions from different quarters were laid to rest by a series of brilliant deductions on the part of a group of senior bureaucrats. In the early 1870s, Aitchison, the Foreign Secretary, came up with the view that the treaties needed to be read with an eye on the circumstances existing when they were drawn up and in the light of the subsequent evolution of the relationship between the States and the Crown.

The theory of suzerainty and the concept of ‘usage’ were also invoked to justify the new policies. In 1877 Lytton advised Lord Salisbury, his superior in London, that “[t]he paramount supremacy of the British Government is a thing of gradual growth; it has been established partly by conquest; partly by treaty; partly by usage.” Thus paramountcy would buttress the British right to confirm all successions to the *gaddi* in princely States; the extension of British jurisdiction over railway lines that crossed the borders of the States; intervention in struggles between princes and their nobles; and the extension of advice to princes about the need to improve or reform their administrations. T. H. Thornton, the successor of Aitchson, developed the theory of “usage”, which held that any “long-continued course of [governmental] practice acquiesced in by the States could be construed as lawful, since acquiescence implied consent.”

Warner, the Political Secretary in the Government of Bombay contributed a doctrine which implied that "the treaties with the Native States must be read as a whole and applied equally to all States." These all kinds of declarations reduced the treaties of the princes with the British Government as mere "scraps of paper". Thus armed, the Government of India steadily deprived the princes of what was left of their sovereignty. From 1878-1886 most of the States were compelled to relinquish control over their post and telegraph networks and to integrate them into the imperial system; in 1879 the salt manufacturing States were prohibited from exporting it and from 1877 the States were gradually deprived of civil and criminal jurisdiction over broad-gauge railways passing through their territory. Bit by bit, too, British Indian currency became legal tender right across the subcontinent and by the end of the century almost all the rulers had been pressured into signing away their right to mint silver and copper coins. Again, after 1879, the States lost the automatic right to employ Europeans; while their freedom to import weapons for the use of their police was steadily curtailed.

So it becomes clear that the issuance of the sanads of adoption to the princely States should not be taken as if the British Government ceased to interfere in their internal affairs. It is not that the actual relationship between the British Government and the States did not change, for there had been since the Mutiny a gradual and steady encroachment on the rights of the rulers in their internal affairs. The doctrine of the 'paramount power' had been a flexible, expanding concept which produced a complex and uncodified political 'law'. Under it, the Viceroy could intervene and deal with the

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29 Ian Copland, The Princes of India, p. 20.
affairs of any State if he thought such action was necessary for the ‘good of the State’ or for the Government of India.

Like so many other features of British imperialism in India, intervention in the affairs of the States reached its climax in the first decade of the new century during the stormy viceroyalty of Lord Curzon (1898-1905). In July 1900, the rulers were informed that they would in future need the permission of the government to travel overseas. In 1902 Curzon personally browbeat the Nizam into renegotiating the 1860 treaty governing the administration of Berar on more favourable terms. He also overhauled the Imperial Service Troop Scheme which made it more expensive for the concerned States. Also the rulers of Jhalawar, Panna and Indore were deposed during his term. Sixty three States were placed under some form of temporary British control. “The tyranny of Curzon’s rule had been so unbearable to his fellow princes”, narrated Scindia of Gwalior to a British official that “nothing would have induced them to put up with it [much longer]”. According to Ganga Singh of Bikaner, the viceroyalty of Curzon was so painful for some princes that merely talking about the epoch was enough to reduce them to tears. Paradoxically, though, the Curzon’s viceroyalty also marked the moment when, after the decades of indifference, the British once more began to view the Indian States as potentially useful players in the great game of empire.

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30 Under the agreement of 1860, the province of Berar had been placed under a British commissioner and part of its revenues attached to pay-off debts incurred by the British officered Hyderabad Contingent. The new agreement which Curzon wormed out of Osman Ali further integrated the administration of Berar with that of the Central Province, and considerably reduced the amount of the Berar surplus which was returned to the Nizam as ‘rent’. Ibid.

31 Lord Minto to Lord Morley 12 Sept. 1907, Ibid., p. 21.

The second great imperial crisis of the nineteenth century—the challenge of nationalism—arose in the 1890s; but, unlike 1857, it arrived not suddenly but stealthily. Nationalism in the form of a political ideology began to manifest itself in the big Presidency cities around the middle of the century, but its transformation into an all-India phenomenon took another twenty years. The movement gathered the steam and by the beginning of the twentieth century the ‘Moderates’ were giving way to the younger and more outspoken men such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Rajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghosh. Some people took to violence and the attacks on British officials became more commonplace.

The government became very concerned with the mass agitation and the revolutionary activities. They sought to find a counterpoise to this nationalist challenge which they found in the policy of cultivating and politicizing for imperial purposes the Indian princes keeping in view the influence and position they enjoyed in the society. The progressive princely States were admired both by their subjects and the open-minded Indians. The nationalists put forward them as an evidence that Indians were really competent to rule themselves. The princely States were considered as “existing specimen[s] of Indian sovereignty.” From almost every angle the princes looked a good bargain.

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33 Besides using the princes against the nationalist challenge, the British also tried to marginalize the nationalists by using the card of Muslim friendship.

34 In 1903, Romesh Dutt, Congress President and champion of good government, affirmed that “no part of the subcontinent is better governed to-day than these States, ruled by their own Princes”. Romesh Dutt. India in the Victorian Age, An Economic History of the People, (London: 1904), p. 32.

35 Speech by Satyamurthy to the All-Parties Conference, Calcutta, 1 Jan. 1929, Times of India, 2 Jan. 929, p. 10.
The princes thought on the issue of the nationalist challenge to the British authority in their own way. The challenge gave the princes new hopes and new fears. On the one hand, it is likely that they saw a chance to join in the challenge, or at least to profit by it, and stem and reverse the steady tide of imperial encroachment on their authority. They might have thought they could effectively press for their demands once they collaborate with the British Government. On the other hand, joining the nationalist movement was not a profitable deal for them. By going over to the side of the nationalists, there was everything for them to fear, for the nationalist movement was democratic. Democracy was a threat to their authority, their unregulated privy purse, perhaps to their "dignity". Probably after considering both the options, they decided to throw their lot with the British.

Finally, the princes were called in to service by the British to deal with the nationalist challenge. Lord Minto issued a circular in 1909 in which he asked the princes to suggest the best ways for dealing with the "sedition". The princes responded very quickly and positively, and in a true loyalist tune. Most of them banned any public meetings, clamped down on the nationalist newspapers and any sort of anti-imperialist activity was banned in their territories.\(^\text{36}\)

The wholehearted support of the princes against the nationalist forces convinced the British Indian authorities to concede to their long pending demand of internal autonomy.\(^\text{37}\) On 1 November 1909, Minto delivered a speech at Udaipur, in which the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the States was announced. Minto said

\(^{36}\) Ramusack, *The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire*, pp. 36-7.\(^{37}\) The princely support was not the only reason that made the British to grant them more freedom, but the home authorities were also determined to introduce constitutional reforms in the provinces keeping in view the ruthless criticism the authorities were facing at the hands of the nationalists leaders. So it became a moral obligation for the British to reward their most faithful allies.
that, "I have always been opposed to anything like pressure on Durbars with a view to introducing British methods of administration". He further stated that, "the reforms should emanate from Durbars themselves and grow up in harmony with the traditions of the States". Defining the future role of the Residents in the princely States, Minto said that, "it is not the only object to aim at[and] though the encouragement of it must be attractive to keen and able Political Officers and it is not unnatural that the temptation to further it should, for example appeal strongly to those who are temporarily in charge of the administration of a State during a minority... 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."

On the basis of this speech, a set of instructions was issued confidentially to all Residents in 1910 in which it was impressed on them to place themselves in the princes' shoes, try to appreciate their point of view; abstain from offering any unnecessary advice, to uphold the dignity of the Darbars and not to interfere in the internal affairs of the States until an open violation of the "basic laws of the civilization" was made by a prince. The political Residents resisted the move as the declaration greatly curtailed their power.

With the declaration of Lord Minto, the whole question of British relations with the princes was reconsidered. The declaration formed the bedrock of the future relationship between the Government of India and the princely States. A corner had been turned and the princes considered it as a new era in relation with the Raj. The princes started demanding for a permanent body through which they could communicate to the

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39 The instruction manual prepared for the Residents in the States came to be known as *Political Department Manual*. Ian Copland, *The Princes of India*, p.31.
Government their opinion regarding the legislations passed by the Government touching their interests. However, the demand was not heeded and the princes had to wait till another crisis—the World-War One—that forced the Government of India to make the structural changes which the princes were demanding.

The princes stood out in their support for the British war effort. The States gave generously of money and munitions. They helped out on the propaganda front too and stood on the Government’s side against the elements opposed to the war on ideological grounds. The princes received the rewards for their help in the war effort in the form of titles and enhancement in their gun-salutes. The war, however, offered an opportunity for them to press their demands more forcefully. The princes’ demands included, among other things, the reformation of the political process in order to change the mental set-up of the officials in the political department and, more importantly, they advocated the setting up of a permanent body for the exchange of opinions and ideas between the States and the British India.

The effects of the World War One on India, particularly in terms of economy, were not so pleasing. This generated discontent among the people. Given the prevailing circumstances, the British had their own compulsions to turn to the princes to face the evident crisis.


For instance, Nawab Osman Ali of Hyderabad was asked by Lord Hardinge to persuade the Indian Muslims to ignore the fatwa issued by the Ottoman Khalifa calling for a holy war against the Allied side.

At the end of the war Nizam of Hyderabad got the title of “Faithful Ally of the British Government” by King George V.


The Muslim support which was available during the Bengal anti-partition agitation could not be gathered this time. The entry of Turkey in the war against the British side and the growing anxiety about the holy
After holding the third all India conference of the princes in Delhi in 1916, Lord Chelmsford, the viceroy, wrote to Lord Chamberlain—the Secretary of State—that, “such gatherings...ensure that the Chiefs’ views are adequately put forward...and save[s] Government from the errors resulting from a misconception of their attitudes. These conferences act...as a safety-valve through which minor grievances find a harmless vent...The old practice of ...‘subordinate isolation’... is now, owing to the greater facilities of communication and the spread of education, impossible to maintain, and it is recognized on all hands that the collective goodwill and support of the Ruling Chiefs is an imperial asset of incalculable value. If the growing demand for collective discussion is disregarded, we run the risk of alienating the sympathies of those whose support is most worth having.”

Chamberlain, who belonged to the conservative thought, did not like the idea of the viceroy. But fortunately for the princes, he had to go in 1917 and was replaced by Edwin Montagu, a liberal, sympathetic to the princely order and to the aspirations of the Indian middle class. In August 1917, ‘Montagu Declaration’ was passed which pledged that, from now, British policy in India would be directed at the gradual development of self-governing institutions. The declaration also raised hopes among the princes.

In the wake of the ‘Montagu Declaration’, the States formed a ‘joint committee’ which gave its report on 4 February 1918 in which it was demanded that a Federal

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Islamic places in Palestine had turned the Indian Muslims against the British. So the only reliable option for the Government of India was the Indian princely order.


Chamber of princes be formed which would advise the government regarding the potential impact of any legislation on the States by the Government of India.

The rulers finally got their long-desired council in 1919 when, as a part of its post-war reform package, the British Government announced the establishment of a 'Chamber of Princes' to advise the viceroy on all the 'questions effecting Indian States generally or which [were] of concern to either to the Empire as a whole or to British India and the States in common'. The Chamber was to have 120 seats and was to meet, at least once a year, at the capital. This body of princes was free to have its own elected president or chancellor but under the overall control of the viceroy. It could elect a six-member Standing Committee whose job was to help the chancellor make the princes' views known to the government.\(^47\)

The installation ceremony of the Chamber of Princes was held at Red Fort on 9 and 10 February 1921.\(^48\) The message of the king George V was read out there by his cousin, the duke Connaught in which the king had declared that "every breath of suspicion or misunderstanding should be dissipated", and "His Majesty now invites Your Highnesses...to take a larger [role]...in the political development of your Motherland."

Recalling the pledge his grandmother had taken "to maintain unimpaired the privileges, rights and dignities of the Princes of India", the king-emperor in his message had wrote:

\(^47\) Foreign and Political Dept., Secret Reforms, June 1920, 11-16, NAI.

\(^48\) However, the Chamber of Princes which was expected to be the representative body of whole princely order could not succeed to bring in to its fold all the princes. Some of the premier States like, Hyderabad, Mysore, Udaipur and Indore did not join the Chamber. The Chamber came to be mainly dominated by the "middle class" States, "whose activities [were] known to be resented and feared by many of the smaller States and to be viewed with dislike by some of the leading princes". Thus the Chamber did not get its true representative character. A brief composition of the ruling elite of the chamber has been given by Ramausack, The Princes of India, pp. 119-22 and 133-38.
"the Princes may rest assured that this pledge remains inviolate and inviolable." This announcement of the king proved a high-water mark of the relationship between the princes and the British crown. "It may, with some justice, be said", wrote the standing committee of the Chamber of Princes in 1929, "that with the inauguration of the Chamber of Princes a new era has dawned in the relations between the Government of India and the States; that with the frank recognition of the Government...that treaties though declared inviolable and inviolate have often been treated as non-existent or obsolete, the rights of princes stand better chance of recognition. It is true that the Government of India do not now claim...that the interests of the States should give way before the interests of Indian Provinces."50

The first twenty years of the twentieth century largely proved very fruitful for the princely India. Mere onlookers and a scorned lot in the times of Curzon, they emerged as acknowledged partners by 1920s. However, unlike the first two decades, the third decade did not prove to be so good for the princes. The reasons could be traced again in the changing political environment of the country and abroad.

Though the government gave the princes the concession of forming a representative body of theirs, it soon began to feel uneasy with the behaviour of the members of the Chamber of Princes. The Residents reported that the princes were avoiding them, ignoring their "advice", going over their heads to Delhi. One officer wrote emotionally that if the trend continued he would soon be reduced to a "mere Post Office".51 Princes started meddling in the politics more than what was good for them, or

49 The Times of India, 10 Feb. 1921.
51 Ian Copland, The Princes of India, p.48.
the Government of India. Some of the princes were indeed becoming more assertive. Thus it became clear to the new viceroy, Lord Reading—who personally did not like the aristocratic nature of the Indian princely order—and the Political Department, that the policy of non-intervention which the Government was following in regard to States would have to be drastically changed so that there could be put a check on their powers.

The offensive mood of the Political Department, dealing with the affairs of the princes, became clear to the princes when they brought before it some old issues and made some new demands. The deadlocks between the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes and the Political Department on the issues of treaty rights and political practice became frequent. The States' suggestion of exercising civil and criminal jurisdiction over the railways passing through their territories was met with strong opposition by the officials. Similarly the princes' request for a judicial enquiry into the erosion of their treaty rights was out-rightly rejected by the viceroy. The viceroy also issued orders to the Residents that they should watch the affairs of the States very keenly, and to report regularly on the style of the governance of the rulers.

Lord Reading also came down too hard on some States individually. Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of the Punjab State of Nabha, was forced to leave the State and declare that he will abdicate the throne in favour of his son once he is of age as a penalty for his supporting the anti-British Akali-movement. The next to go was the Maharaja Tukoji Rao Holkar of Indore in 1925. He was also made to vacate the throne for his son. The issue of Berar, which was considered to be the benchmark of the relations between the

52 The charges leveled against Tukoji Rao Holkar were that he had ordered to get back his court dancer, Mumtaz, who was living with a rich Muslim merchant of Bombay, Bawla. In the process, Bawla was murdered. The incident provided the British an opportunity to seal his fate by constituting a commission of inquiry against him. Fearing his dismissal, he voluntarily made way for his son.
Government of India and the State of Hyderabad, again came to surface during the viceroyalty of Lord Reading. When the claim of Osman Ali regarding the restoration of the full autonomy fell to deaf ears, he tried to challenge the validity of the Government’s decision of not entertaining his claim. He wrote a letter to the viceroy informing him that the Berar matter could not be treated as a closed chapter. This infuriated the viceroy and in March 1926, he wrote a long letter to the Nizam which has been recognized as the classic statement of the doctrine of unregulated paramountcy. He wrote, “The sovereignty of the British Crown is supreme in India, and therefore no ruler can claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing. Its supremacy is not based only on Treaties and Engagements but exists independently of them, and...it is the right and duty of the British Government...to preserve peace and good order throughout India.” The letter, which was released to the Government Gazette for a wide publication so that the other rulers could also see it, further wrote that, “the right of the British Government to intervene in the internal affairs of Indian States is another instance of the consequences necessarily involved in the supremacy of the British Crown... and where imperial interests are concerned, or the general welfare of the State is seriously and grievously affected by the action of its Government, it is with the Paramount Power that the ultimate responsibility of taking remedial action, if necessary, must lie. The varying degrees of internal sovereignty which the rulers enjoy are all subject to the due exercise by the

In 1860, an agreement had been signed between the Government of India and the States of Hyderabad by which Berar was placed under a British commissioner and part of its revenues were specified to pay-off the debts incurred by the British officered Hyderabad contingent. In 1902, Osman Ali was made to sign a new agreement by which the administration of Berar was further integrated with that of the Central Provinces, and considerably reduced the amount of the Berar surplus which was returned to the Nizam as ‘rent’. In 1919, Osman Ali revived his father’s claim of complete restoration of the province to the States.
Paramount Power of this responsibility." In July 1926, the Nizam was asked to delegate his executive powers to a council whose members would be under the overall control of the Government of India.

Though the Government succeeded to intimidate these princes, these and other such actions and policies, for instance, fiscal policy, and the management of post offices and mainline railways came under fire from the States. They did not feel cowed down and decided to take a firm stand against these arbitrary actions of the Government.

The princes were also feeling marginalized in decision-making after the reforms were introduced as now the Legislature had elected Indians—the princes were unrepresented—which made policy-making more tilted towards provinces. Thus they decided to take the questions of paramountcy and the constitutional reforms of 1919—which effectively denied them the representation in the Legislature—so that they could safeguard their interests. In November 1926, the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes called upon the new viceroy Lord Irwin, to hold an Independent Committee of enquiry to review the operation of the paramountcy. Though both the viceroy and the home authorities had reservations about princes’ call, they gave go-ahead for the enquiry. By giving the green signal for an enquiry, the government just wanted to buy time. Thus, a three-man committee under the chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler.

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54 Quoted in Government of India, White Paper, Appendix I.
55 In regard to the Government’s fiscal policy, the States argued that the goods imported from the British India were charged imperial customs duty. However, these States were not paid any remuneration for the income they indirectly generated for the Government. The States also felt that they were patronizing the post and railway systems but were not entitled to a return from these imperial services. The States were forced to use these services but they lay outside their control. The Directorate of the Chamber’s Special Organization, The British Crown & the Indian States, pp. 177-80, 183-92, 201-4.
56 Both Lord Irwin and the London officials did not want to change the status quo and believed that enquiry "would most completely allay the princes’ apprehensions ...and hamper very seriously the conduct of
the retired governor of the United Provinces, was appointed to report upon the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Indian States and to inquire into the financial and economic relations between British India and the States.57

Butler who presented his report to the parliament in March 1929, had some good points for the princely India but fell short of what the princes had expected. The Butler Committee report made a strong case for the princes by endorsing the rulers' assertion that their relations were with the Crown, not with the Government of India, and could not therefore be transferred, without their consent, to "a new government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature." However, the Committee refused to define paramountcy. It concluded that "[p]aramountcy must remain paramount; it must fulfill its obligations, defining or adapting itself according to the shifting necessities of time and the progressive development of the States".58 Regarding the princes' claim that the powers of the paramountcy were defined by the treaties, the report said, "We cannot agree that the usage is in any way sterile. Usage has shaped and the developed relationship between the Paramount Power and the States from the earliest times... in all the cases usage and sufferance have operated to determine questions on which the treaties, engagements and sanads are silent." The report further stated that the paramount power had an obligation to protect its clients against attempts to overthrow them, or to substitute another form of government. The report also explained that if, there was "a widespread demand for [constitutional] change" in a State; the latter would be obliged "to

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58 Ibid., p. 31.
suggest such measures as would satisfy this demand." The Butler report came as a shock to the princes. They had expected some relief from the Government but the report warned them of interference if the reports of the misgovernment were received.

However, soon the princes got another opportunity to plead their case before the Government when the viceroy announced that a Round Table Conference would be held at London in 1930. The main aim of the Conference, the viceroy declared, would be to discuss the constitutional reforms in accordance with the Government's understanding that Dominion Status was the logical and inevitable goal of the process of devolution begun by the 'Montagu Declaration'. However, Lord Irwin made it clear to the princes that the questions and issues dealt in the Butler report would not be taken for any consideration at the Round Table Conference.

In the deliberations of the first Round Table Conference which were held at London in November 1930, the representative princes announced that they were ready and willing to join an all India federation occupying "a position of honour and equality in the British Commonwealth of Nations". "Our desire", declared Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir, "to co-operate to the best of our ability with all sections of this Conference is a genuine desire; so too is genuine our determination to base our co-operation upon the realities of the present situation." Sir Muhammad Akbar Hydari, the Hyderabadi Minister spoke more or less in the same tone as did the Maharaja of Kashmir. He emphasized that "the States... can fully sympathize with the aims and ideals of the...

59 ibid., pp. 24, 28, 31 and 32.
60 Indian Round Table conference Proceedings, (Calcutta: 1931), p. 15.
peoples of British India and are ready to work in harmony with them for the Greater and united India”.  

However, after returning from London, the representative princes found it difficult to rally the fellow princes around the idea of the federation. Gulab Singh of Rewa, Udaibhan Singh of Dholpur and many like-minded rulers did not want to be associated, even marginally, with democracy, and believed that federation would inevitably result in the subordination of the States to “the rule of the united majority from British India, who are republicans at heart”. The smaller States had their own apprehensions regarding the proposed federation. They feared that they would have no voice at the centre, and thus would be entirely at the mercy of the big States.

Many conservative British Indian bureaucrats also were not in favour of the federation. They took the view that the devolution was incompatible with the maintenance of Britain’s imperial position in the subcontinent and were in favour of limited reforms.

The Simon Commission Report, the three Round Table Conferences, the publishing of the main constitutional reforms in a White Paper in 1933 followed by a bill

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61 Ibid., p.16.
62 Regarding a proposed federation Gulab Singh of Rewa had already made his concerns public. He had opined that the federation would “lead to democratization in the States and [institutionalize] aggression from the young nationalism of British India”. See Ian Copland, *The Princes of India*, p. 87-92.
63 In the meantime there was an unprecedented upheaval in the domestic life of the States: with Jammu and Kashmir, Alwar, Bharatpur, Bhawalpur, Kapurthala and Jind all experiencing major uprisings and bloody communal clashes. These uprisings occasioned, in two cases, heavy-handed exercises of British paramountcy—Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir was made to take on an English ICS officer as his prime minister and the ruler of Alwar was deposed in 1934. These revolts had a great psychological effect on the minds of the rulers, for it made them realize how dependent they had become for their protection on the sheltering umbrella of British paramountcy that would vanish once they entered the federation. For a detailed account of the 1931 uprising in Kashmir, See Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir*, (Paniket: 2003), pp. 210-58. On the Alwar and Bharatpur risings see I.S. Marwah, ‘Tabligh Movement Among the Meos of Mewat’, in M.S.A. Rao (ed.), *Social Movements in India*, Vol. II, (Delhi, 1979).
based on the White Paper was introduced in the British Parliament on December 19, 1934 and after months of protracted debates in the Parliament, the Bill finally received the royal assent on August 2, 1935. The Bill came to be known as the Government of India Act 1935. The Act had two main parts; one dealing with the Federation of India and the other with Provincial Autonomy. The Act provided for the establishment of a ‘Federation of India’ consisting of Governors’ Provinces and princely States. Though the Act paved the way for an all-India federation; but it did not bring the federation into being. While it was not necessary that all princely States should join the federation, the federation could not be formed unless the majority of the States signified their adherence to it by signing the Instrument of Accession.

With the passage of the Government of India Act, it seemed to many observers of the Indian political scene that the hard work of constitution-making was over. But it did not prove as smooth as the government had thought. The federal scheme was a non-starter because the princely States did not join the proposed federation, which would have meant the surrender of some of their autocratic powers.

The hesitancy of the rulers to join the all-India federation was greatly influenced by the fast changing political scenario of the country. The stunning rise to power of the Indian National Congress after the 1937 elections made it to change its hitherto followed policy of *laissez-faire* towards the princely States. The victory made the

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64 The Congress formed the government in five provinces: Madras, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa; in Bombay, Assam and in the North West frontier Province it was the largest party and formed the governments.

65 The former policy of the Congress during the 1920s and 1930s was to avoid entanglements in the States, both by prohibiting the setting up of local branches there and by making it clear to its supporters that it believed that the internal governance of the States was a matter for discussion and resolution between the rulers and their subjects. See James Manor, *Political Change in an Indian States: Mysore 1917-1956*. (New
Congress leaders so confident that they now wanted to dominate the federal part of the government as well. To meet that end, they had to change their stance on the princely States.\textsuperscript{66}

In the Haripura session of the Indian National Congress in February 1938, it was decided that the congress workers could participate in the political struggles in the States. In December, Gandhiji admitted in Harijan that he had been mistaken about the political potential of the States’ peoples, and pronounced the policy of non-interference inappropriate “in the face of [the] injustice[s] perpetrated in the States” by autocratic darbars.\textsuperscript{67} Nehru accepted the presidency of the All India States’ Peoples Conference in 1939. In the inaugural address he asserted that time had come for the local States’ struggles to be integrated with the major struggle against British imperialism\textsuperscript{68} to transform them into “one mighty struggle for India’s independence.”\textsuperscript{69} A month later, the Congress leaders endorsed this united front strategy and offered to meet with the Standing Committee of the All India States’ People’s Conference to devise a common programme of agitation.

With the support of the congress workers, the political struggles in the States gathered momentum. In April 1938, in Mysore, at least twenty people were killed in the

\textsuperscript{66} Though the Indian national Congress was assured of a healthy representation at the Centre also by the federal provisions of the Government of India Act 1935—the government calculated it could anticipate holding at least 75 percent of General, Scheduled Caste, Labour and Women’s seats in the lower and perhaps 80 percent in the upper house—this was not enough, however, to give it an absolute majority. If it wanted to govern in its own right, Congress would have to capture, by one means or the other, some of the princely seats. The Congress would require 63 per cent and 76 per cent of the States’ seats in the Council and the Assembly respectively.

\textsuperscript{67} Ian Copland, \textit{The Princes of India}, pp. 163-70.

\textsuperscript{68} Ramusack, \textit{The Princes of India}, p. 181-2.

agitation which was mainly aimed at demanding the right for the States Congress to fly the national flag.\textsuperscript{70} This and other types of popular agitations in the States, like Mysore, Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir,\textsuperscript{71} raised the hopes and the Congress leaders seriously began to consider the possibility that the monarchical order might be overthrown in advance of the British departure. Had the British not responded to their urgent calls for help, some, if not all, of these darbars would certainly have fallen.

Pressed for the rapid constitutional reforms, the States tried to pass the buck. C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, the Dewan of Travancore—while facing the agitation in his State—observed that it was legally “not possible” for the ruler to grant responsible government “without the concurrence of the British Government”.\textsuperscript{72} This did not have the desired results as the British Indian Government made it clear that “the Paramount Power would certainly not obstruct proposals for constitutional advance” in the States. Linlithgow, the viceroy, clearly remarked that “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 happenings inside the States...we and the States have now...to pay for 30 years of laissez-faire”.\textsuperscript{73} In 1939, Linlithgow used his annual address

\textsuperscript{70} Rangaswami, \textit{The Story of Integration}, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{71} In the wake of the Haripura decision, there erupted agitations in a number of States. From Orissa States, about 30,000 people took flight to the British India to escape persecution by darbars. In Ramdurg and other southern Deccan States, anti-darbar demonstrations were held. In Rampur, a British political agent was put to death.
For a detailed discussion on the trajectory of the Congress policy and of other nationalist organizations towards the states and how the people’s indigenous political movements in the states affiliated with the larger national movement of India, see Suhail R. Lone, \textit{Indian National Movement and the Freedom Struggle of Jammu and Kashmir (1931-47)}. M.Phil dissertation submitted to the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 2013. Though the study deals with the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, the writer simultaneously explores the general policy of the Congress, the Muslim League and other political organizations towards the princely states.
\textsuperscript{72} Statement to the Travancore Assembly 7 Feb. 1938, cited in Ian Copland, \textit{The Princes of India}, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{73} Linlithgow to Zetland 21 Feb. 1939, Cited in Ibid.
to the Chamber of Princes to announce his new policy of constructive engagement. To the Standing Committee of the Princes he stated that ‘the fact is the older status is gone forever’. The announcement came as a rude shock to the princes. The announcement, the princes thought, would have a potential impact on their internal autonomy. For over two decades the princes had fought to have paramountcy circumscribed, and had persuaded the British into putting, if not legally, then at least conventional checks on the exercise of their rights of intervention. Now, Linlithgow was threatening to turn back the clock to the old days of Lord Curzon.

The absence of the “protection of the treaty rights of the States” in the Government of India Act 1935, the differences among the princes, the changed attitude of the Congress towards the States, the political unrest in the States, and the shift in the governments’ policy finally made the States not to join the federation. The “federal offer” was finally wrapped up in 1939 when the negotiations between the British Indian government and the princely States broke down.

To the British officialdom, the virtual abandonment of federation after ten years of intensive effort was more than just a political setback to their plans, to underwrite the Raj by building an effective counterpoise to Congressite democracy. It represented a personal defeat for them. Rightly or wrongly, the British believed they had been betrayed.

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75 Hyderi, the minister of Hyderabad complained that Hoare, the secretary of States had assured the Indian States Delegation that there would be no objection to the rulers protecting their treaty rights by means of specific clause in the Instrument of Accession; but the promise was not kept when the Act was finally drafted. See Ian Copland, *The Princes of India*, p. 175.

76 The 1938-39 had badly shaken the princely order. The princes were also not happy with the response of the government to their call for help. The darbars complained that the government helped niggardly and took long in coming.
The Second World War changed the course of events dramatically world over; so did it in India. The advancing forces of Hitler crossed into Poland on 1 September, 1939. Within two days Britain was at war with Germany. The outbreak of the war provided the princes with the much needed opportunity to repair the damage done to the relationship between the States and the government by the federation debacle. The States generously helped in the British war efforts and altogether, the cost of war materials provided by the States down to 1945 exceeded £5 million. In addition, the States made numerous direct grants of cash and gave generously of their land, buildings and workforces for war purposes. Both Linlithgow and the home authorities praised the darbars’ contribution to the war-efforts. As a gesture of good-will, the government instructed the Residents to halt the scheme of constitutional reforms for the time being.\(^7\) In his ‘August Offer’ of 1940, Linlithgow emphasized the right of the States to stand aside from any Indian union formed as a result of post-war constitutional discussions.

Sir Stafford Cripps, who headed the Cripps Mission to India in March 1942 to persuade the Congress to drop its opposition to the war, told the Standing Committee, “so far as the undertaking of our obligations of defence of the States was concerned... we should stand by our treaties with the States unless they asked us to revoke them.”\(^7\) Fitz, the Political Secretary to the Government of India, informed the chancellor of the Chamber of Princes that the fulfillment of the treaty obligations remained “an integral part of His Majesty’s Government’s policy”, that there would be ‘no unilateral


\(^7\) Ibid., vol. I, p. 240.
denunciation' of the treaties, and that London had no objection to the States forming subsidiary unions among themselves.  

However, this war-time rapprochement which was strengthened by the Congress rebellion of 1942, did not last long. Taking advantage of the government relaxations, the princes grew more assertive and tried to act as a lobby group making demands on the government. This made the government uncomfortable. This, along with some other factors, such as the victories of the Allied forces in the war, made the British to again turn their attention towards the Indian affairs and to put screws on the princes.

By the end of 1942, the government was convinced that the sweeping reforms were the need of the hour. The first thing Francis Wyle, the new Political Officer—with liberal views—did was to replace many senior Residents who had likely become too partial towards princes.  In the next stern step he tried to ‘redraw the map’ of the princely States by eliminating the small States. This, he thought, would be done by merging them with the larger neighbours. Accordingly in 1943, various small States of Kathiawar and Central India including 300 square miles, inhabited by nearly 1.2 million people, were ‘attached’ by executive order to larger neighbours. There was a mixed reaction to this development from the bigger princely States.

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80 Ian Copland, The Princes of India, p. 197.
81 Various States challenged the legality of the order in courts. The initial opinion of the courts seemed to be tilted in favour of the States. This made the authorities uncomfortable because they did not want to lose the gains made as a result of the ‘attachment scheme’. They succeeded to bring a Bill in the parliament which was passed by the name of India (Attachment of States) Bill 1944. With the passage of the Act, the process of the transformation of the political map of Central India got accelerated. Ibid., 199.
82 The Chamber of Princes got divided over the ‘attachment drive’. Some thought that the rights of the rulers could be removed simply by a mere viceroyal notification and they suspected dishonesty in the whole process. The order showed that if their patron, the British crown, was capable of legislating ‘sovereign’ States out of existence; where they appeared to stand in the way of India’s advancement. Sooner or later Delhi would try something similar with the larger States. While as others welcomed this decision; though
The next step which the government took was to tighten their control over the economic activities of the States. The States had made great strides during the war years in terms of industrial growth much to the dislike of the government because it threatened to divert its capital from the provinces, where it was badly needed, and the government had also serious reservations with the States' tax policies. After July 1944, the businesses in the States supplying goods to the government under wartime contracts were forced to accept payment through their head offices in British India, which made such payments liable to provincial taxation. Import and foreign exchange controls were also tightened. Now it became clear that the British policy towards the princely States had been slowly but continuously changing, but the government was not yet prepared to sever its ties with the princes, for they were still contributing to the war efforts and potentially acting as counterweights to the nationalists.

However, by May 1945, the war ended in Europe and within weeks the Congress leaders were released. In July, Britain saw the election of the socialist Labour government, which was committed, at least on paper, to the speedy decolonization of the subcontinent. This dramatic turn of events forced the Chamber of Princes to develop a strategy in order to safeguard their interests. The Chamber under the chancellorship of Nawab Hamidullah of Bhopal designed a strategy to insulate the States from the impact of an early British departure from the subcontinent. The strategy among other things included the acceleration of the internal reforms which would make the States able to

privately. They argued that the continuous tradition of poverty and corruptions in these small States had tarnished the image of the monarchical order. See, Transfer of Power, vol. IV, p. 563.

83 The political department's Lepel Griffin complained that "the existence of taxation vacua or low pressure taxation areas within the geographical limits of India not only tends to suck...[new] industries out of British India into the States but creates conditions of unequal competition between [established] industries in the two areas". Griffin to chancellor 28 June 1944, Wavell Coll., Pol. Dept., Special Branch, 78, 30/sb/46, July, 1944, NAI.
front up to the post-war bargaining with the backing of a solid core of ‘loyal subjects’. The plan of the constitutional reforms produced results. Between a short period of two years—1945 to 1947— the proportion of Chamber States endowed with representative institutions went up from three-quarters to seven-eighths, while the number boasting partly responsible executives rose from 5 to nearly 25 per cent.

Despite having persuaded the fellow princes to introduce speedy constitutional reforms in their States, Hamidullah was still uncertain about the future. He continued to press the British to make a commitment regarding the ties between the princes and the crown, and their constitutional position within the framework of the new India. He wanted them to make their policy public, in order to put an end to the uncertainty. Paul Patrick, the Political Officer assured Hamidullah in private conversation that London acknowledged “the right of States, on the lapse of the Paramountcy, to enter into negotiations with the foreign powers”. Though the chancellor got the informal assurance from the government there was the next challenge in the offing: the Cabinet Mission.

The Cabinet Mission left for India in March 1946. After much deliberations and discussions in India, they issued a document which came to be known as the ‘Memorandum of 12 May 1946’. The memorandum affirmed that, “when a new fully

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84 The general assumption seemed to be that any devolution of power would be confined to the provinces, and that the imperial links with the States would continue. However as peace started descending on Southeast Asia and the pacific, the Chamber under the leadership of Bhopal put the final touches to a grand strategy designed to guard the princes and their States from the impact of an early British departure from the subcontinent. This strategy included: the further rebuilding of the Chamber of Princes; accelerated internal reforms; the maintenance of the imperial connection; a tactical alliance with the Muslim League; and a negotiated settlement with the Congress.

85 The Times of India, 6 July 1946.

86 Extract from political advisor’s talk with Bhopal 5 June 1946, enclosure in Abell to Turnbull 13 June 1946, Transfer of Power, VII, p. 908.
self-governing or independent government or governments came into being in British India, His Majesty's Government's influence with these governments would not be such as to enable them to carry out the obligations of paramountcy; nor did they contemplate the retention of British troops in India for that purpose. Thus, as a logical sequence, and in view of the desire expressed to them on behalf of the States, His Majesty's Government would cease to exercise the powers of paramountcy. This meant that the rights of the States which flowed from their relationship to the Crown would no longer exist, and that all the rights surrendered by the States to the paramount power would return to them. Political arrangements between the States on the one side and the British Crown and British India on the other would thus be brought to an end. The void would have to be filled by the States entering into a federal relationship with the successor government or governments in British India, or by entering into particular political arrangements". The memorandum also referred to "the desirability of the States, in suitable cases, forming or joining administrative units large enough to enable them to be fitted into the constitutional structure, as also of conducting negotiations with British India in regard to the future regulation of matters of common concern especially in the economic and financial fields."^87

The princes welcomed the Cabinet Mission Plan as it appeared that the Plan assured them the independence after the lapse of British paramountcy in India. The Plan also made the provision for an all-India assembly to settle the details of the new constitution. The States were also required to send their delegates to the Constituent Assembly. But the States had reservations about the nature of this proposed Constituent

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body. Joining the Assembly, the States thought, would lock them into particular constitutional arrangements which would not be in the best princely interests. So the princes decided to lay down preconditions for the States’ entry into the Constituent Assembly. In regard to the selection of the delegates, the Chamber of Princes rejected the mechanism of popular election; it expected a weighted representation and opposed any proposed constitution with provisions antagonistic to the monarchical form of government. It also stressed that the States be allowed to retain ‘full rights of administration’, subject only to central supervision.

The unity of the purpose however needed unity in the ranks. Both the chancellor and his patrons—the British had realized that the group loyalty and the unity of purpose were essential if the princes hoped for a reasonable settlement with the nationalist centre. Polindia, the Political Secretary to the government of India wrote to the Resident in Jammu and Kashmir: “it is important that at this critical stage the States should maintain a common front for the purpose of negotiating with British India in the Constituent Assembly.” Chancellor opined that, “we must hold together”, but his message went unheard and the princely order could not hold their bond together during the concluding years of the Raj.

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89 Record of Interviews between Cabinet Delegation, Wavell and Bhopal, 9 and 12 May 1946, Transfer of Power, VII, p. 473 and 521.
91 Circular from Chancellor 31 Dec 1946, Pol. Dept., Special Branch, 78, 30/ Sb/46, N.A.I.
92 There are various reasons for why the princely sates could not hold together at this critical juncture. The gap that had already emerged between the large and small States grew much more pronounced during the concluding years as it became clear that there was going to be room for only a minority of the States in the new India. The princely order also got divided on the religious and linguistic lines. Till now the States had remained comparatively free from the communal violence, but as the barriers between the two Indians began to crumble, this syncretic darbari political culture began to wane. However, the most fateful reason that eventually divided the princely camp was not class or ethnicity as such, but ideology. The rulers for
Thus by the spring of 1947, the princely States had for all the practical purposes disintegrated and put themselves exposed to the assaults of their adversaries.

It was during the decisive viceroyalty of Lord Mountbatten when the question of Indian provinces as well as States was "finally solved". He arrived in India on 22 March 1947. In his first speech, he announced that he had come with the mandate from the British Government to transfer power to Indians by June 1948. It was on 3rd June 1947, that Lord Mountbatten came up with his famous plan for the partition of India. According to the plan His Majesty's Government would be prepared to relinquish power to two Governments—India and Pakistan—on the basis of Dominion Status. In regard to the States, the plan laid down that the policy of His majesty's Government towards the Indian States contained in the Cabinet Mission 'Memorandum of 12 May 1946' remained unchanged.

No sooner had Mountbatten announced his 3rd June Plan than the nationalist camp, particularly Congress, rose in opposition to the States' non-participation in the Constituent Assembly. Jawaharlal Nehru of Congress, who had accused the rulers of having a 'shop-keeper mentality', declared that any State which refused to enter the Constituent Assembly would be treated as 'hostile'. He reiterated this line several times publicly and made it clear to the Viceroy that he would 'encourage rebellion in all States that go against us'.

This and some other factors raised serious questions regarding the practicality of the provisions, dealing with the States, of the 3rd June Plan. The viceroy long had opposed the spread of democracy, but now, as the British departure drew near, some of them began to change their tone.


94 Viceroy was forced to change the policy of his government by some other factors such as: Bhopal, Travancore, Hyderabad and some other States' intentions of asserting independence after the proposed devolution of power. Mountbatten also thought that in the negotiated settlement with the Congress, the
was ‘forced’ to think for a via-media. Mountbatten, after much deliberations with a cross-section of leaders, finally reached to the conclusion that, “As soon as I turned my attention to the problem of the States, it became evident to me that their [aspirations to] independence...would not be worth a moment’s purchase unless they had the support of one or other of the Dominions.” With the problem redefined in this way, the solution became obvious to him—the accession of the States to either of the two Governments. The solution was made easy by V.P. Menon, the Reforms Commissioner. He proposed that the States should be asked to accede only in respect of defence, foreign affairs and communications—areas over which they had long ceased to exercise jurisdiction. So it became clear that the viceroy’s policy towards the princes had changed. He made it clear to the rulers that the only way they could stay in the commonwealth was to join up with India or Pakistan. In this way the plans of the princes for the formation of States’ unions were shelved. The plan attracted vehement protests from the princes and severe criticism from a section of the British officials. The government was accused of ‘a gross breach of faith’. But all kinds of protests were in vain.

Mountbatten gave go-ahead to the establishment of a new central department under Sardar Patel to oversee ‘matters of common concern’ with the States. The three-subject accession plan was formally unveiled to the rulers and ministers at a meeting of the Chamber of Princes on 25 July 1947. The Instrument of Accession, prepared by the Political Department, made it clear that acceding States were not bound, ‘in any way’, to

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States probably held the key. With this end in view, in conversations with the various Congress leaders, he made it clear that he had set his face against any continuing relationship between the United Kingdom and the non-acceding States.

95 Mountbatten to Listowel, 8 August 1947, Transfer of Power, XII, p. 585.
96 Menon, The Story of Integration, pp. 65-84.
the future constitution of India. It also stated that in all areas except defence, foreign affairs and communications, sovereignty would continue to lie with their rulers. They were also assured that their extra-territorial rights would be respected and they would be allowed to democratize slowly.

Accession was facilitated by persuasion, pressure, blackmailing and warnings from time to time. Thus the States were left with no option but to accede either with India or Pakistan. Most of them simply accepted their fate and signed the Instruments of Accession.

However, the Mountbatten’s scheme of accession did not address the concerns of the Congress and others about the viability of the States and the future of the monarchical system. It was then left to V.P. Menon and Vallabhbhai Patel to ‘finally settle’ the ‘problem’ of the States. No sooner had the States signed the Instruments of Accession, than Patel and Menon began to plot their downfall. This ‘project’ which took about two years, involved the amalgamation of the States into larger administrative units and merger with the erstwhile provinces, their rapid democratization, and their total subordination to the federal centre. Merger and democratization together brought the States into line with the rest of the country as regards the manner of their governance; but the States in their relations continued to remain protected by the Instruments of Accession, which restricted the control of the Indian union in the States. The Congress

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98 Mountbatten reminded them that the powers in these three areas were already being exercised de facto on their behalf by the Delhi government.


100 Mountbatten in his speech to the Chamber of Princes impressed upon the princes that the offer of 25 July might not last; so the rulers should not think twice. Mountbatten under the influence of Patel issued Hamdullah of Bhopal and Ramaswamy Aiyer of Travancore with dire warnings about what might happen if they did not place themselves under the umbrella of the government of India. See, Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, (London: 1951) pp. 121-2.
leaders assumed that the Instruments of Accession would have to be renegotiated eventually in the ‘interests’ of nation and ‘social justice’. Thus the States were made to sign new Instruments of Accession ceding to the union the power to pass laws in respect of all matters falling within the federal and concurrent legislative lists. In this way the princely India and its age-old monarchical system, effectively disappeared down the trapdoor of history.

**Conclusion:**

Clearly, the princely states which covered one-third of the total area of India represented a unique system of polity that had developed in India, partly as a result of policy and partly as a result of historical accident. The Government of India pursued, in several marked periods of spectacular aggression followed by periods of hesitation and rest, a policy of enlarging the empire by annexing princely States. By the second decade of the nineteenth century virtually all the major ‘country powers’ had been linked to the company by treaty. What is more, the essential elements of British paramountcy—the system of Residents at the princely courts, the regulation of successions, and control over the States’ foreign affairs—were all laid down in this period. However, after the Revolt of 1857, the policy of annexation was abandoned by the British Indian Government. It was the theory of paramountcy and the concept of ‘usage’ which was put forward as a uniform principle in relation to the princely states. This gave the British ample opportunities to intervene in the internal affairs of the States which reached its climax during the viceroyalty of Curzon. It was the challenge of nationalism, which took the shape of mass agitation with the dawn of the twentieth century, that the government
decided to follow the policy of cultivating and politicizing the Indian princes to counterpoise this challenge. In 1909, in lieu of their support the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the States was announced by Lord Minto. The Residents were asked to put themselves in the princes' shoes. With the declaration of Lord Minto, the whole question of British relations with the princes was reconsidered. The long standing demand of Indian princes for the establishment of a permanent body representing them was finally met in 1919 when the British Indian Government, as a part of its post-war reform package, announced the establishment of the Chamber of Princes.

However, unlike the first two decades of the twentieth century, the third decade did not prove to be so good for the princes. The government tightened the noose around the princes. The report of the Butler Committee, which was appointed by the British Government on the request of the princely states to review the operation of the paramountcy, came as a shock to the princes. The report warned the princes of interference if reports of misgovernment were received.

In the wake of the strong nationalist upsurge in India, the British Government decided to take up the question of constitutional reforms for India. The Simon Commission Report, the three Round Table Conferences and the publishing of the main constitutional reforms in a White Paper culminated in the passage of the Government of India Act 1935. The Act provided for the establishment of a 'Federation of India' which could not be formed unless the majority of the States signified their adherence to it. However, the absence of the 'protection of the treaty rights of the States' in the Government of India Act 1935, the differences among the princes, the changed attitude of
the Congress towards the States, the political unrest in the States, and the shift in the governments' policy made the States not to join the federation.

The damage done to the relationship between the states and the Government of India by the Federation debacle, the pressure on the princely states to introduce sweeping reforms and the government's decision to 'redraw the map' of the principely States by eliminating the smaller States made it clear that the British policy towards the princely States had been slowly but continuously changing; but the government was not yet prepared to sever its ties with the princes, for they were still contributing to the war efforts and potentially acting as counterweights to the nationalists.

The fast-changing political scenario in India and abroad after Second World War and the princes' failure to introduce the much needed reforms, the active support of the Indian National Congress for the peoples' movements in the princely states, the absence of unity in the ranks and files of the princely order and finally the speedy decolonization of the Indian subcontinent put the final nail in the coffins of the princely India. In this way the princely India and its age-old monarchical system effectively disappeared down the trapdoor of history.

It is in view of this broader context that an attempt would be made in the following chapters to study the relationship between the British Indian paramount power and the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.
Chapter Two


"...No Englishman can leave Kashmir without a sigh of regret that a province so full of promise should ever have been allowed to slip through our fingers..."

—Lieut. Torrens

Their fields, their crops, their streams,
   Even the peasants in the Vale,
They sold. They sold all, alas!
   How cheap was the Sale.

—Sir Mohammad Iqbal

The princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, the "Sentry State" of the British Indian Empire, bordering the three great powers in the East—the British, the Russian and the Chinese—came into existence with the ominous terms of the Treaty of Amritsar signed between Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu and the British East India Company on 16th March, 1846. The formation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir was unique as disparate territories stripped by the Company from Sikh Kingdom of Punjab were brought together to form the state. The boundaries of the state were redrawn more for geo-political and administrative convenience rather than on a commonality shared by the people living...

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1 The State of Jammu and Kashmir is usually referred to as simply Kashmir. In that, strictly speaking, Kashmir means the Vale of Kashmir only, and not other parts of the State such as Jammu, Ladakh and Baltistan. It has been tried here, as much as possible to use the term Kashmir to mean the Vale of Kashmir, and Jammu and Kashmir to refer to the State as a whole. Inevitably, however, it has not been possible to be consistent in this system of terminology as one might wish.


there. How did the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, which lasted for more than a century, come into being?4

Before moving ahead to the processes which were involved in the formation of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, it is necessary to give a brief historical background of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh which were brought into a single political entity. A significant point to take note of is that the administrative entities which formed the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir were politically independent of each other before 1846 A.D.

Kalhana, the celebrated historian of the 12th century, recorded that Kashmir’s political history began in the middle of the 3rd millennium. Most historians, however, started their history of Kashmir with the reign of Ashoka. The historical record becomes less ambiguous with the conquest of Kashmir by this Mauryan King, who lived between 274 B.C. and 237 B.C.5

The succeeding two thousand years saw the constant flow of invasions and dynastic eruptions which brought to power ruling families representing the three major communities of India—the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs—as well as the Afghans. A succession of Hindu dynasties reigned Kashmir until the early part of the 14th century,

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4 At the time of the Transfer of Power in India in 1947, the conflict between the two successor states—India and Pakistan—to the British Raj began over the right to control the destiny of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. In the process the state got bifurcated; the greater part of which is being held by India, while as the rest remains with Pakistan.

5 “Kashmir can claim the distinction of being the only region of India”, wrote Dr. M.A. Stein, the translator of the celebrated history book Rajatarangini, “which possesses an uninterrupted series of written records of its history... In other parts of India the student of history is obliged to reconstruct the general outlines of the history with the help of the scanty and frequently uncertain data... and can scarcely ever hope to recover a continuous account of the leading events even for a couple of centuries. If the student of the Kashmirian history finds himself in a far better position this is due to the preservation of the documents...” Kalhana. Rajatarangini, Tr. M. Aurel Stein, 2 vols, (Westminster: 1900), vol. 1, pp. 30-1.
when Rinchan Shah, a Tibetan soldier of fortune seized the power. Embracing Islam, Rinchan Shah became the first Muslim king of Kashmir. Kashmir attained the peak of her glory during the period of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420 to 1470 A.D.), popularly known in Kashmir as Budshah. Budshah's Kashmir was a model of economic prosperity, social justice and communal harmony in this part of the world. He was followed by various Muslim dynasties for next three centuries and in 1586, Kashmir became a part of the Mughal Empire. As lovers of natural beauty, the Mughal kings visited Kashmir quite often and took steps to add to its loveliness by raising stylish buildings and beautiful gardens. But Mughals, generally speaking, did not bother much to improve common man's lot. In 1752, with the collapse of the Mughal Empire, the power vacuum created was filled by the Afghans. The Afghan rule over Kashmir, which lasted for 67 years, was one of cruelty and loot. The valley was removed from the grasp of the Afghans by the Sikhs in 1819. The Sikh rule was not less worse than that of the Afghans. This was perhaps the shortest reign in Kashmir’s long history, for in less than three decades the advancing power of the British East India Company, combined with internal dissension in the Sikh empire, following the death of Ranjit Singh, the fate of Kashmir was sealed and it was placed under the control of the Dogra dynasty.6

Unlike Kashmir, the early history of Jammu is still folded in mist. From times immemorial—for 5000 years, the legends say—the principality of Jammu had been the seat of the rule of a Hindu dynasty, of a family of Rajputs, whose influence spread for

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some distance over the lower hills. There was little intercourse with the outer world; some contact with it occurred indeed during the 16th century onwards from the passage near, if not through, the country of Mughal Emperors of Delhi towards Kashmir. Dhruv Dev (1703-42) established the Dogra Rajput family as rulers of Jammu in the declining days of the Mughal Empire. The most notable ruler of Jammu was Ranjit Dev. With his death, which occurred in 1780 A.D., began changes from outside influences. Jammu became the target of expanding Sikh power in the early years of the nineteenth century, and in 1808 General Hukam Singh conquered this hilly tract for the Lahore Durbar. In 1822, Ranjit Singh, the architect of the Sikh state, made Gulab Singh the jagirdar of the Jammu principality.

Squeezed between Tibet, India and Kashmir, Ladakh as an independent entity suffered a precarious existence. The entire Baltistan-Ladakh area was one of the several small semi-independent Muslim and Buddhist states ruled by autocratic chiefs. Ladakh originally formed one of the provinces of Tibet. But in the 15th century A.D., when Tibet was conquered by the Chinese, Ladakh became completely independent. But Ladakh with its sparse population and strong neighbours was more often the victim of aggression

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8 The Dogras, broadly speaking, are a linguistic group found primarily in the Jammu region. Their language, Dogri, is highly influenced by Punjabi. The Dogras include Muslims and Rajputs among their members. Ibid., pp. 9-10, 43-7, G.M.D. Sufi, Kashmir, vol.2, pp.752-4. See also, Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 201.
9 A jagirdar was the holder of a non-alienable land revenue assignment. He had to maintain law and order in his jurisdiction, collect the revenue on behalf of his overlord, keeping a part of it for his services, and to render military assistance to his overlord whenever asked for.
than an aggressor itself. Occupied in 1834 by Gulab Singh, Ladakh was for the first time made the part of the Indian subcontinent.

Raja Gulab Singh, a direct descendant of the Hindu ruler Dhruv Dev, was born near Jammu in 1792. He was enlisted in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh—the undisputed Sikh ruler of Punjab—in 1809, followed by his two brothers, Dhian Singti and Suchet Singh, and a nephew Hira Singh. It was mainly through his skill on the battlefield that Gulab Singh rose in the ranks of the Sikh hierarchy. His ascent was so remarkable that he came to be described by Victor Jacquemont, the French traveller, as “the greatest Lord in the Punjab; second only to the Sikh Maharaja.”

Gulab Singh set out to the career of conquests—as a Sikh lieutenant—to a first expedition to Kashmir in 1813. Though the campaign led by Ranjit Singh in person into Kashmir ended in disaster, yet the courage showed by Gulab Singh in bringing his forces back safely pleased Ranjit Singh and he promoted him in his command. At the siege of Multan, in 1818, Gulab Singh’s personal bravery attracted Ranjit Singh’s favourable notice. In 1819 he received the Sikh ruler’s permission to crush the revolt of Mian Dido, ‘the robber’, at Jammu. He finished the campaign successfully. The next few campaigns which saw his bravery were against the pretty chieftains of Rajauri, Bhimber, Basohli and Kishtawar. Delighted with the latest territorial acquisitions of Gulab Singh in the hills, Ranjit Singh decided to place Jammu solely under the charge of Gulab Singh. He personally travelled to Akhnoor (Jammu) in 1822 to confer the title of Raja on Gulab Singh. At the same time,

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14 Jammu was conquered by Ranjit Singh in 1808.
16 Ibid., pp.115-6.
his brothers and a nephew also secured unique positions of authority and influence at Lahore Darbar. Dhian Singh was installed as the Wazir of the Maharaja and conferred the title of Raja-e-Rajgan, i.e. Raja of Rajas, in 1828. His son Hira Singh became a favourite of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and “was allowed a chair in [the Maharaja’s] presence when all others...stood or took less exalted places.” Such a public demonstration of favour showed by Ranjit Singh towards the Dogra Rajas enhanced their stature and they became a power to be reckoned with at the Lahore Darbar.

While his brothers remained at Lahore, Raja Gulab Singh focused his attention towards his newly assigned territory. The ambition to acquire new territories certainly motivated Gulab Singh to send an expedition to Ladakh in 1834 under his ablest general Zorawar Singh which the latter successfully accomplished. Baltistan was conquered in 1840, and an unsuccessful bid to control Tibet was made in 1841. Although these conquests were carried out on behalf of the Sikh State, all these attacks originated not in Lahore, but in Jammu, and in result much of the region passed under the personal control of Raja Gulab Singh. Thus “whether it was a policy or whether it was accident, by 1840 Gulab Singh had encircled Kashmir.”

The stability of the Punjab depended on the astuteness of Ranjit Singh himself. His death in June 1839 opened up many factions in the Sikh society, caused as much by

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19 Gulab Singh presented himself at the Sikh capital on important occasions. He visited the court on the eve of festivals, when he received *Khilats* (robes of honour) and was required to be present during the visits of foreign dignitaries. Shahmat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, (London: 1874), p. 94.
the British presence at the Punjab frontiers as by the conflicts following the creation of a new army and the ranks of the nobility. The army and the royal relatives now came out in the open. Dhian Singh continued as wazir under Kharak Singh, the new Maharaja. However, the attempts of the Dogra Rajas to fill the power vacuum, created at the Lahore Darbar, met with bitter opposition. Dhian Singh was caught up with court intrigues in 1843 and was thus murdered. Same was the fate of the other Dogras Rajas. Thus, by the end of 1844 most of the powerful figures of the Rangit Singh era had been eliminated, save Gulab Singh, who stayed away from Lahore. This changed political scenario of Lahore forced Gulab Singh to make his moves with extreme caution. Increasingly marginalized at the Sikh kingdom, Gulab Singh waited for an opportune time to turn the tide to his favour.

In the meantime, the British officials of the East India Company were watching the factional fighting and the growing instability at the Lahore Darbar with great uneasiness because they had an important reason to see a strong Sikh kingdom, for they treated it as a useful buffer between their Sutlej boundary and the turbulent Afghans. This objective of the British had been duly fulfilled by the Sikhs after the treaty of “perpetual friendship” was signed in 1809. But after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the British saw their interests in jeopardy. The situation was further aggravated by

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23 Suchet Singh died in 1844 in a clash with his nephew, Hira Singh and the latter was murdered by the Sikh army in Dec.1844. Bawa Satinder Singh, *The Jammu Fox*, (Delhi: 1988), pp.54-6, 63-73.
26 The treaty of Lahore was signed on 25th April 1809, whereby it was agreed that the Sikhs would not commit any encroachment beyond the Satluj, while the British agreed to have no concern with the territories and subjects of the Maharaja to the north of the Sutlej. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, vol. vi, p. 22.
the news of the efforts of the Afghan ruler to strengthen his army and an attempted alliance with Russia. Alarmed by the developments at the Northern frontier, Sir Henry Hardinge, the Governor General began to prepare his army for the final face-off with the Sikhs.27

On the other side, examining the political scene at the Lahore Darbar, Gulab Singh desired to become independent in the territories already under his jurisdiction. He was pragmatist enough to perceive that the expansion of the Company's power beyond the Sutlej was inevitable after the death of the old monarch. He concluded that his objectives could be achieved only under the patronage of East India Company. So keeping in view this motive, he made repeated offers to join the British against the Sikhs, if they would recognize his sovereignty. But his offers were either rejected or not responded.28

Though the first Anglo-Sikh war had begun in November 1845, the most memorable and the last battle of the war was fought at Sobraon on 10th February 1846.29 In the meantime, Gulab Singh was installed as wazir at Lahore, who immediately put himself in communication with the British, tendering every assistance in his power for the fulfillment of any ends in regard to the state of Lahore which they might have in view.30 Gulab Singh took the decision of collaborating with the British after giving serious considerations to the other alternatives available to him. Gulab Singh thought that he could neither participate in the war on the part of the Sikhs, nor remain secluded at

27 Mridu Rai, Hindu Rulers Muslim Subjects, p. 25.
28 Bawa, Jammu Fox, pp. 98-9, 101-8.
30 Lord Hardinge to Secret Committee, cited in Bawa, Jammu Fox, p. 112.
Jammu. He stood the risk of losing his territories in both the cases. In case of "an amicable Anglo-Sikh settlement, his territories would be negotiated away", or his indifference would invite him the wrath of the Khalsa, if it emerged successful in the war. He thus concluded that his interests would best be served only by paving the way for a "decisive Sikh defeat".  

Though leaderless and abandoned, the Sikh army fought with reckless resignation but was ultimately defeated. However, the victory of the East India Company was achieved at a huge cost. Its budget went soaring back into deficit. It compelled the British to drop the idea of annexing Punjab to their own empire. There were certain other reasons which weighed on their mind for not taking control of Punjab. The acquisition would have brought them face to face with the Afghans who had defeated them in the 1st Anglo-Afghan war (1839-42). The occupation of Punjab also needed a great military deployment. So the best possible means to fulfill their objectives seemed to weaken the Sikh state militarily and to break its territorial unity. These twin objectives were achieved through the treaties of Lahore and Amritsar.

The treaty of Lahore signed on 9th March, 1846 brought to an end the 1st Anglo-Sikh War. Article IV of the treaty required the Sikhs to cede "...to the Honourable

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31 Bawa, Jammu Fox, p. 121.
32 There is some evidence that Gulab Singh was not the only Sikh functionary to make overtures to the British. Lal Singh, Gulab Singh's predecessor at Lahore Darbar; Tej Singh, the commander-in-chief; and even Rani Jindan, the Regent of the infant ruler Dalip Singh, and other members of the Darbar had also secretly offered their help to the British against the Sikh army. Cunningham, A History of Sikhs, p. 327; Latif, History of Punjab, pp. 541-3; Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, (Princeton: 1963,1966), Vol. 2, p. 48.
35 Ibid., pp. 123-4 and 133.
Company the territories situated between the rivers Beas and Indus, including the provinces of Cashmere and Hazara.\footnote{Aitchison, \textit{A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads}, vol. vi, pp. 38-41.} Article XII of the treaty obliged the Sikh Maharaja to recognize the independence of Gulab Singh in the territories as may be made over to him by the British government.\footnote{Ibid.} The peculiarity of the treaty of Lahore lay not only in the fact that a new territorial unit of Jammu and Kashmir was created out of the Lahore State but clearly speaks of a pre-arrangement of Gulab Singh with the British.\footnote{Ibid.} The treaty of Lahore also virtually paved the way for the second treaty signed a week later on 16\textsuperscript{th} March 1846. The second agreement signed by the East India Company with Gulab Singh came to be known as the Treaty of Amritsar.

Article IV of the treaty of Lahore literally provided the opening for the Treaty of Amritsar whereby the British government transferred \textit{...in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body, all the hilly or mountainous country...eastward of the river Indus and westward of the river Ravee...}\footnote{Ibid. Article V.} Gulab Singh agreed to pay the British Government the sum of seventy-five lakhs of Rupees \textit{“in consideration of the transfer made to him”}, as stated by the Article III of the Treaty.\footnote{Ibid. Article I.} The treaty obliged the Maharaja to submit any disputes to the British arbitration \textit{“that may arise between himself [Gulab Singh] and any neighbouring state.”}\footnote{Ibid.} The Treaty promised the British aid \textit{“to Maharaja Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external threats.”}\footnote{Aitchison, \textit{A History of Sikhs}, pp. 322-4.}
Article X of the Treaty stipulated that Gulab Singh acknowledged and recognized the British supremacy and would "...in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed... and three pairs of Cashmere shawls." It was at this point of time that Gulab Singh is reported to have "...stood-up, and with joined hands, expressed his gratitude to the British Viceroy,—adding, without however any ironical meaning, that he was indeed his Zur-Khureed, or gold-boughten slave!" The phrase "Zur-Khureed" had unfortunate overtones and would haunt Kashmiri self-respect for many generations to come.

The Treaty of Amritsar only transferred the legal title of Maharaja to Gulab Singh. He had to face a stiff resistance from Sheikh Imamuddin, the Sikh governor, who refused to turn over Kashmir to him. It was only after the united authority of the British, Lahore and Jammu governments that Imamuddin cleared the way for Gulab Singh's entry into the Valley in November 1846. Thus emerged the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Why Transferred?

There followed a heated debate in and outside the British official circles pertained to the wisdom of handing over of Jammu and Kashmir to Gulab Singh. The polemic continued throughout most part of the nineteenth century. Lord Hardinge, the then Governor General had been severely criticized for the transfer of Kashmir to Gulab

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42 Ibid. Article IX.
43 Ibid.
44 Cunningham, A History of Sikhs, p. 324.
46 Bawa, Jammu Fox, pp. 125-9.
Singh. General Charles Napier, the then governor of Sindh, remarked about the transfer: “What a king to install! Rising from the lowest foulest sediment of debauchery to float on the highest surge of blood he lifted his besmeared front, and England adorned it with a crown!”

Lord Ellenborough, the predecessor of Hardinge in India, irritated by the creation of the new mountain state, wrote “there have been times when the treaties with Gulab Singh as the minister of the Lahore Government and the detaching from the Lahore dominions a very extensive territory for the purpose of placing it under the independent authority of that minister, thus rewarding a traitor, would have been measures a little too oriental in principle.”

Lieut. Colonel Torrens during his visit to Kashmir in 1861 wrote, “Poor Kashmir! When after so many vicissitudes of slavery to a foreign yoke,...it seemed that at last its condition was about to be ameliorated, its old ill-luck stuck by it still!...and they were again sold into the hands of the Philistines.” Further, lamenting over the ‘sale-deed’—as the Treaty of Amritsar was denounced—Torrens remarked, “No Englishman can leave Kashmir without a sigh of regret that a province so full of promise should ever have been allowed to slip through our fingers.”

“Surprise has often been expressed,’ wrote Sir Francis Younghusband, sometime the British Resident in Kashmir ‘that when this lovely land had actually been ceded to us, after a hard and strenuous campaign, we should ever have parted with it for the paltry sum of three-quarters of a million sterling.”

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48 Ellenborough to Hardinge, quoted in Bawa, *Jammu Fox*, p. 120.
After his sojourn in Kashmir in 1875, W. Wakefield observed, "...the huckstering spirit that so often pervades our national policy, and which caused the great Napoleon to apply to us the term of a nation of shop-keepers, was dominant in this case: for, relinquishing all the advantages that accrued to us from its possession, the supreme government sold this fair province to the Rajah Gulab Singh."\(^5^1\)

J.D. Cunningham, who had served under Lord Hardinge, wrote in 1853 that, "the arrangement was a dexterous one, if reference be only had to the policy of reducing the power of Sikhs; but the transaction scarcely seems worthy of the British name and greatness."\(^5^2\) Robert Thorp, who visited Kashmir in 1870 and openly criticized the Dogra regime, wrote, "...in no portion of the treaty made with Gulab Singh was the slightest provision made for the just or humane government of the people of Cashmere and others upon whom we forced a government which they detested."\(^5^3\)

As late as in the beginning of the 20th century, the controversy over the Treaty of Amritsar was perhaps revived by poet Mohammad Iqbal. It is important to mention here that the poet never wrote in the context that the Dogra rule should have been substituted by that of the British. He expressed himself in an entirely different perspective.\(^5^4\) But his views echoed the same feelings as were those of the critics of the treaty. His now famous verse reads as:

\[\text{Verse:} \]

\[\text{W. Wakefield, } \textit{The Happy Valley}, \text{ (Delhi: first published 1908, repr. 2008), p. 90.}\]
\[\text{J.D. Cunningham, } \textit{A History of Sikhs}, \text{ p. 323.}\]
\[\text{Robert Thorp, } \textit{Cashmere Misgovernment}, \text{ (London: 1870), p. 60.}\]
\[\text{Dr. Iqbal, who had a Kashmiri ancestry, wrote this verse on the occasion of the inauguration of the League of Nations. His motive seems to have been to seek the attention of the international community towards the pitiable conditions of the people they were in after British handed over Kashmir to Gulab Singh. Further, Iqbal's condemnation of the treaty as 'sale-deed' might well have inspired the people of Kashmir to denounce the Dogra hegemony, and uniting them into an organized struggle against their rulers.}\]
Oh! Morning breeze! If thou happen to pass by Geneva, 
Convey my message to the League of Nations. 
Their fields, their crops, their streams, 
Even the peasants in the Vale, 
They sold all, alas! 
How cheap was the Sale.  

It seems that the handing over of Kashmir to Gulab Singh, as the above-mentioned views reveal, was a foolish act and a short sighted stroke of British policy. The critics were of the opinion that the cool and temperate valley could have been utilized as a colony. But the fact of the matter is that the British were becoming a paramount power in the Indian subcontinent and all the policies they followed were perceived to be in the best interests of the new imperialists. It was not without taking into consideration all the relevant circumstances that the agreement by which Gulab Singh got Kashmir was signed.

The handing over of Kashmir to Gulab Singh was a deliberate attempt on the part of the British. It seems that it would have been difficult for the British at that point of time to hold Kashmir. There are some important reasons which were advanced against holding Kashmir. Its occupation, wrote Lord Hardinge to the Secret Committee, "would result in collision with neighbouring chieftains, for whose coercion a huge military presence and greater resources would be needed." This they could not have afforded at that time owing to their weakened military strength and a deficit in the Indian treasury because of their successive military actions against the Afghans and the Sikhs. The extension of the boundaries of the British Empire beyond Sutlej at that time would have been difficult to protect. With a hostile Punjab on the line of communications—as the

56 Harding to Secret Committee, Foreign Dept., Sec. Branch, Ref. No. 7, 4 March, 1846, N.A.I.
Lahore kingdom was still outside the pale of the British Empire—it would have been
difficult to hold Kashmir.\textsuperscript{57} Hardinge further emphasized that the move to take possession
of "these largely mountainous territories would be an economy liability, because while
the territories except Kashmir were deemed as unproductive which would not ever pay
the expenses of its management."\textsuperscript{58} One of the main features of the British policy at that
time was its anti-Muslim stance that had developed in the wake of its disastrous defeat at
the hands of the Afghans. The British officials thought that the creation of the Jammu
and Kashmir state and handing over it to Gulab Singh would prevent its emotional and
political links with the neighbouring Muslim states.\textsuperscript{59}

The other considerations which weighed with the British authorities for slicing
away Kashmir from the Lahore Durbar and making it over to Gulab Singh were, their
desire to weaken the Sikh state and to reward Gulab Singh for his behavior during the
Anglo-Sikh War. The new hill state would be setup to act as a counterpoise to the Sikh
state at Lahore.\textsuperscript{60}

The debate over the Treaty of Amritsar continued. Its advocates, however,
prevailed, and Kashmir remained under the control of the Dogras until the British
withdrawal from India.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{58} Foreign Dept., Sec. Branch, Ref. No. 7, March, 1846, N.A.I.
\textsuperscript{59} Foreign Dept., Sec. Branch, Ref. No. 8, 19 March 1846, N.A.I.
\textsuperscript{60} Bawa, \textit{Jammu Fox}, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p. 120.
Emergence of a Distinctive Entity

By virtue of the Treaty of Amritsar, Gulab Singh succeeded not only in severing his feudatory allegiance to the Lahore Durbar but he now became an independent ruler of his native land Jammu and the Himalayan kingdom of Kashmir. He also retained his authority in the frontier areas of Ladakh and Gilgit. The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir thus assembled was, therefore, of considerable complexity. It was, moreover, in the context of the broad sweep of Indian history a totally new polity quite without precedent. The complex configuration of the princely state was acutely summarized by Sir Owen Dixon, a United Nations Mediator, in his report to the Security Council in 1950: “The state of Jammu and Kashmir is not really a unit geographically or economically. It is an agglomeration of territories brought under the political power of one Maharaja. That is the unity it possesses.”

The newly formed state of Jammu and Kashmir consisted of the three distinctive entities which differed from one another not only in physiography, but also in demography and culture. The Valley of Kashmir, a structural basin, with its temperate climate and fertile soil was enclosed by high mountains which gave it rather clearly defined physical boundaries. Its position between roughly parallel ranges—the Pir Panjal to the south-west and the Great Himalayas to the north-east—gave a singular insularity to the Valley. Constituting a little more than 10% of the total area of the

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princely state, over half of the population of the state was found in the Kashmir province, of which over 90% comprised of Muslims.\footnote{\textit{Walter Lawrence, the Settlement Commissioner of Kashmir, wrote that the Muslims formed 93% of the total population of the valley. The rest included the Hindus and the Sikhs. Lawrence, \textit{The Valley of Kashmir}. The census report of India gave, by and large, the same figures. R.G. Wreford, \textit{Census of India, 1941. Vol. xxii, Jammu and Kashmir, Parts I and II, Essays and Tables}, Ranbir Government Press. 1943, p. 81.}}

The original heartland, Jammu, which was separated from the valley by the Pir Panjal range, rose gradually to the south-west from a low alluvial plain of the Punjab. Jammu was predominantly Hindu in population and dominated by the Dogras.\footnote{\textit{Ibid., p. 82.}}

The frontier areas of Ladakh, Gilgit and Baltistan consisted of high and dry mountains, and covered almost three-fourths of the total area of the new state. Though being the largest division of the princely state in respect of area, Ladakh and Gilgit were sparsely populated areas. The people of Ladakh were almost entirely Tibetan Buddhists. Gilgit and Baltistan formed an overwhelmingly Muslim population.\footnote{\textit{Ibid., p. 80.}}

In ethnic and cultural terms, as with its physical makeup, the identities of the people of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir were characterized by a heterogeneous quality. The great geographical barriers which separate Kashmir from the rest of India, occupied with the marked difference of climatic conditions, have from early times assured to the alpine land a distinct character of its own which manifests itself in all matters of culture, customs, and social organization. The seclusion which Kashmir has enjoyed owing to its peculiar position has even to the present day materially restricted the geographical horizon of its inhabitants. This small mountain territory to which nature has

\footnote{\textit{Census of India, 1941, vol. xxii, p. 80.}}
given sharply-defined boundaries and a uniform character of its own has had always borne a distinctly local culture. It cannot be doubted that this fact has decidedly been advantageous for the preservation of historical traditions.  

The people of Ladakh were of Mongolian stock while those of Jammu and Kashmir provinces descended from the Indo-Aryans. The cultural distinctiveness was reflected by the affinities of the people of Jammu to the culture of Punjab, and by those of Ladakh, to the culture of Tibet. Furthermore, the new state became a multi-lingual entity, with Kashmiri and Dogri as its principle languages.

The newly-founded state of Jammu and Kashmir became territorially the largest princely state of India. It had an area of over 84,000 square miles, followed by Hyderabad with an area of over 80,000 square miles. The state occupied strategically a unique position in the All India British Empire. The state was created in the interest of the imperialist frontier defence—a policy which postulated that the state should be sufficiently strong for such a role, and that the British-Indian government should have an adequate control over its affairs. The touching of the boundaries of the newly-founded state of Jammu and Kashmir with the big powers of the time, particularly Russia, was the

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68 About 34 percent of the population speak Kashmiri, and nearly 15 percent Dogri, while Punjabi is the tongue of nearly 30 percent. A great variety of languages are used, in various parts of the state, by comparatively small numbers. Imperial Gazetteer of India, (Oxford: 1908), vol. xvi., p. 99.
70 The British hoped that the state “would resist any establishment of a Muslim state on this side of the Indus”, and also to “act as a counterpoise against the Sikh state.” Governor General’s Despatch to Secret Committee, 19 March 1846. No. 8, Foreign Department Proceedings, NAI.
key factor to determine the formulation of the British policy in regard to the state. The state acted as a sort of buffer between their Indian Empire and Russia.\(^{71}\)

Thus, the foundation of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and the assumption of power by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1846 was attended by extraordinary circumstances. Further, the heterogeneity of the state was the direct by-product of the military and diplomatic accomplishments of the founder of the Dogra dynasty, combined with the political acumen which completed the expansion of British power into northern India. And yet the Dogra rulers were not able to unify the state. The different communities continued to live a separate existence. As noted by Richard Temple, a Resident in Hyderabad, the “double title” of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir was “characteristic of his country...: a political agglomeration of mountain tracts that have little connection otherwise with each other.”\(^{72}\)


Chapter Three

Legal Status: Provisions for Intervention

The phrase, legal status of the intervention, might seem paradoxical at first sight but given the fact that the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the British bound by the treaty of Amritsar, were not as two independent states but one as a supreme state and the other as a subordinate state, and the supremacy of the British was granted by the treaty itself. Whenever the government of India intervened in the affairs of the state there was a considerable debate on the legal aspect of the issue. The relations were by and large conducted under the broad framework of the treaty. The treaty was not just an instrument for the creation of the state but determined the status of the two parties vis-à-vis each other. Thus the provisions of the treaty remained relevant throughout the period even if they were invoked more in violation than in observance. The treaty continued to serve as a frame of reference whenever there was a controversy and disagreement between the two parties. The British intervention progressively increased throughout the period. How far that interference was warranted by the provisions of the treaty is what the chapter tries to explore.

The references made to the treaty throughout the period are so numerous and frequent that one is tempted to explore the extent of its influence on the relations of the two parties and any student working on British intervention in Kashmir finds it difficult to ignore the provisions of the treaty while studying the relations. The uniqueness of the treaty, which is at once a sale deed, an instrument for the creation of the state, and a document governing the future relations compels one to study its impact on the future
relations. It is also interesting to see if the treaty served the same purpose to the British as the treaties with other Indian princes or was it anyway different. As the treaty was conducted in the last phase of the Company’s rule, which was soon after succeeded by the Crown, did the British Indian government under crown behave anyway differently with the princes as the Queen’s Declaration would tend us to believe?

In the interstate relations the treaties are generally made to create a new arrangement which better suits the two parties or at least the stronger party. But in case one party is dependent on the other its adherence to the provisions is the barest minimum required of it. The treaty of Amritsar had given the British sufficient leverage and scope to exploit it to their fullest benefit. Still recourse was taken to the tenants of the treaty only where it suited their interest. In case it failed to serve the purpose even through self-serving interpretations, the desired results could be achieved through arm twisting.

The treaties and agreements concluded by the British in India were deliberately kept vague and self-contradictory so as to enable the powerful party to make anything out of it. As discussed in the previous chapter, the main purpose in handing over Jammu and Kashmir to Gulab Singh was to secure the north-western frontiers of the Indian Empire. It pre-supposed a strong state with sufficient British control over its affairs. But no such provision was included in the treaty of Amritsar, and this led historians like K.M. Panikkar to emphasize the independent status of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. Panikkar supported his claim by arguing that “no control was exercised by the British government in the [Kashmir] administration, and no Resident was appointed”.

1 Foreign Department, Sec. Branch, Ref. No.8, 19th March, 1846, NAI.
Whenever, in fact, the question of appointing a Resident in Jammu and Kashmir was raised by the Indian government, the Maharaja objected to it on the ground that his independent status was guaranteed by the first article of the treaty of Amritsar. However, reading between the lines, it becomes clear that the treaty was never meant to be what it tends us to believe. The Treaty of Amritsar was a classic example of self-contradiction, if Article I gave the state “in the independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh”; this independence was certainly diminished by the definite assertion of British supremacy in Article X. Besides, the above Article reduces the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir to a mere feudatory chief as he is expected to engage himself to send to the British Government an annual gift which “signifies more than an exchange of courtesy, being a symbol of allegiance and subordination”. Further, the ambiguity is so glaring that the word “independent possession” in the Article I does not make it clear whether it is independent from the British or from the Lahore durbar. While the Maharaja reads it as independent of the British in the internal affairs, the British make it otherwise. Barely three days after the treaty had been signed, Lord Hardinge, the Governor General wrote to the Secret Committee of the Board of Directors that, “the Maharaja is declared by the Treaty

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3 Maharaja to Dufferin, 14 Jan. 1886, Foreign Department Progs., Sec. E, July 1886, Progs., No. 427. NAI.
4 The clause one of the Treaty of Amritsar reads as: “the British Government transfers and makes over for ever in independent possession to Maharajah Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the high or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Indus and the westward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahol, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore. Dated 9th March, 1846.” Laying down a subordinate position for the Kashmir ruler, Article X reads as: “Maharajah Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government and will in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Cashmere shawls”. Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads, pp. 165-6, Articles I and X. Full details of the Treaty of Amritsar are given in Appendix 1.
5 Warner, The Native States of India, p. 322.
independent of Lahore state and under the protection of the British Government," although the territory had already ceased to be under the Lahore Durbar by dint of the treaty of Lahore.

After a careful perusal of the treaty of Amritsar one thing becomes clear that so much ambiguity was left in the document that even if taken literally anything could be made out of it. What the Maharaja is granted by one article stealthily and vaguely is taken away by the other openly. Since the British themselves were the arbiters in any dispute or controversy, their understanding or interpretation was bound on the Maharaja. Whenever there was a controversy regarding any issue—be it imposition of the Resident, stationing of the British troops or appointment of any British Indian in the services of the Maharaja—the British always prevailed whether convincingly or unconvincingly.

While dealing with the Maharaja, the British employed the method of gradual imposition of their version rather than a sudden one to make it less offending and look less ultraviolent. When Lord Hardinge makes of “independent possession” as “independent of Lahore state” this point is not stressed upon the Maharaja as these were early days in the relations and there was no urgent need to drive it home to him; instead it is revealed to the Secret Committee. In fact, it is in a way contradicted by Henry Lawrence, the British Resident at Lahore while writing to Gulab Singh in 1847 when he makes the “independent possession” conditional to his capacity to govern his subjects with justice and equanimity. In other words, the word independence does not refer to

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6 Hardinge to Secret Committee, Foreign Department, Secret, March 19 1846, NAI.
7 See Article V of the Treaty of Amritsar.
8 Foreign Department, Secret, 28th January, 1848, 43-A., NAI.
independence from Lahore state but it is not unconditional. Whenever a controversy propped up or the British tried to do something against which the Maharaja protested as something against the treaty, they would in effect grant him some time but only after asserting their position on the issue. As a result, when the time of real action came, the Maharaja would be psychologically prepared for it as something unavoidable. Thus the British would first establish their claim firmly and act only when the necessity warranted such intervention.

A classic example is the question of establishing British cantonment in the state on which Maharaja Pratap Singh offered most stubborn resistance. He was personally very much disinclined to see British troops stationed in his territory, and laboured under the apprehension that the measure would badly compromise his "independent status". He feared that the British officers quartered in Kashmir would interfere with his officials and subjects; the collusion that would consequently occur would result in British interference with the internal administration of the state. He argued that the measure contemplated was contrary to the treaty of Amritsar, and offered instead to raise an army of his own to be trained by British officers in his paid employment. In return he demanded that the Indian government should grant him a subsidy necessary for the maintenance of such force. A similar subsidy, he argued, was being paid to the Amir of Kabul for maintaining an army to check Russian advance towards India. Lord Dufferin, though prepared to consider Pratap Singh's representation, was determined that there should be no misapprehension in his mind about his position vis-à-vis the British government. He

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made it quite clear that if in future the government of India should decide in favour of such a cantonment he would expect Maharaja as a loyal feudatory of the Queen Empress to accept the decision with readiness and goodwill.  

Broadly speaking, the British intervention was made on two grounds both of which had been conveyed to Maharaja in clear terms time and again. The first being the security of the state, as the state of Jammu and Kashmir had to be used as a frontline state. The phrase “independent possession” even from Maharaja’s point of view was restricted to the internal matters. Any intervention to counter the foreign threat, whether real or perceived, did not fall under its purview. The second being Maharaja’s capacity to govern his subjects with justice. Barely had the ink of the treaty of Amritsar dried-up, the British starting impressing upon the Maharaja that they had every right to meddle in the affairs of the state. Henry Lawrence, the British Resident at Lahore, who was deputed by the Governor General to make an on the spot inquiry on the reports of misgiving or oppression, impressed upon the Maharaja that “the essential condition of his independence was the capacity to govern his subjects with justice and equanimity, and his ability to ameliorate their condition; and in case the administrative set up was not reorganized some other arrangement will be made...”. Lawrence also made the Governor General to administer a stern warning to the Maharaja that if he failed to ameliorate the situation, “a system of direct intervention must be resorted to”.  

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10 Dufferin to Maharaja, 16 March 1886, Foreign Department Progs., Sec. E, July 1886, No. 427, NAI.
11 See Articles IV, V and VI of the treaty.
12 Foreign Department, Secret, 28th November, 1847, Nos. 36-41, NAI.
13 Foreign Department, Secret, 28th Jan. 1848, No. 35, NAI.
14 Foreign Department, Secret, 28th January, 1848, No. 43-A., NAI.
Given the geographical location of the state bordering the most formidable adversary of the British Indian Empire, the Russia, any interference in the subordinate state for upgrading the security carried sufficient weight. Likewise being the supreme power it was responsibility of the British government if the subordinate ruler, relieved of any outside threats, oppresses his own people with impunity. Since no such explicit provision was made in the treaty, the British made it emphatically clear to the Maharaja in the subsequent communications like the above one. Thus, the rules of the game set so early by the British Government in their dealings with Maharaja were, by and large, in accordance with the real politic, but how far these rules were played fairly with the administration of the state of Jammu and Kashmir need further probing.

If the treaty was deliberately kept ambiguous, why then the British so early felt the need to spell out character of the treaty and convey to the Maharaja overtly and covertly is intriguing. Whether these references by various British officials aimed at removing the ambiguities in the treaty and misgivings in the mind of the Maharaja or were a result of the change of heart with regard to the creation of the state or change in circumstances or a combination of all is difficult to tell. However, one thing is clear that the British officials were disenchanted with the Maharaja soon after the creation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Lord Hardinge, notwithstanding his concluding the treaty with Gulab Singh, did not admire the latter. Despite the favourable settlement he awarded to Gulab Singh, he described the Jammu Raja as “the ablest scoundrel in all Asia.”

To his wife he wrote, “Gulab Singh is the greatest rascal in Asia. Unfortunately it [was] necessary to improve his condition, because he did not participate in the war against

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15 According to Article X of the Treaty signed in 1846 the British declared themselves the supreme power.
16 Bawa, Jammu Fox, p. 118.
us...and give him a slice of the Sikh territory...and treat him better than he deserve[ed].”\(^{17}\)

Lord Dalhousie despite his change of heart since the Wazirabad Conference\(^{18}\) typified the same disenchantment on the eve of his retirement, when he said “in 1846 we unwittingly handed over [Kashmir] to a chief who has proved himself a veritable tyrant, and who already appears to be the founder of a race of tyrants.”\(^{19}\)

Deeply apprehensive of these persistent misgivings of the British, Gulab Singh worried that an ordinary succession might not follow his demise. Failing health increased his fear. To avoid any would-be pitfall and determined to ensure the continuance of the Dogra dynasty, he abdicated early in 1856 in favour of Ranbir Singh, the heir apparent. And Gulab Singh thereupon assumed the Governorship of the Kashmir province. For all practical purposes, however, Gulab Singh continued to be the real sovereign of the kingdom until his death.\(^{20}\) Abdicating throne in favour of his son to avoid any danger goes directly against the assurance given by the British government in the Treaty of Amritsar that the British government “transfers...to Maharajah Gulab Singh and the heirs

\(^{17}\) Ibid.

\(^{18}\) The East India Company’s directors appointed Charles Napier as the Commander-in-Chief of Lord Dalhousie. Napier was one of the most zealous critics of Gulab Singh. Soon after his appointment, Napier singled out the Kashmir ruler as one of his chief targets. He wrote to his brother that “my first blow will probably be at Goolab Sing.” Declaring that “Goolab is not to be trifled with”, the General threatened that he would resign if his advice were disregarded. Napier, *Life of Charles Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 156.

In spite of Dalhousie’s indifference towards such schemes, the constant clamouring of his Commander-in-Chief persuaded him to make an on-the-spot check in the north-west by the end of 1850, and he asked Gulab Singh to meet in Punjab. Two men met at Wazirabad on December 26. Determined to allay the suspicions of the Governor-General, Gulab Singh startled Dalhousie when he unblushingly grabbed his dress in his hands, and cried loud, “thus I grasp the skirts of the British Government, and I will never let go my hold.” The gesture impressed the Governor-General immensely. Pledges of friendship and loyalty were given by Gulab Singh. The parleys with Gulab Singh created a lasting impact on his mind. Williams Lee Warner, *The Life of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, 2 Vols., (London: 1904), vol., i, p. 366.

\(^{19}\) Bawa, *Jammu Fox*, p. 179.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
male of his body all the hilly and mountainous country”. So this shows that the British government never meant to go by the provisions of the treaty.

The annexation of Punjab to British India further wetted the appetite for this border state. However having put Maharaja under sufficient control, the British set to become the virtual rulers while keeping the shadow of the Maharaja in place.

The physical presence of the British in the state administration started earlier with the appointment of Officer on Special Duty to look after the interests of European tourists in the state. The annexation of the Punjab pushed the British Indian frontiers along the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The territorial contiguity opened up the flow of European tourists into the state particularly the valley of Kashmir which provided a welcome refuge from the scorching heat of Indian summer. Maharaja tried his best to come up to the expectations of the tourists but the alleged arrogance of some tourists who treated the administration like their personal attendants forced the Maharaja to complaint to the British government. The complaint proved counterproductive as it offered the British with much needed opportunity of establishing their physical presence in the affairs of the state administration. Ostensibly acceding to the grievances of the Maharaja the British would grind their own axe. The Governor General decided to appoint a British officer to be posted in Srinagar. This appointment had a huge symbolic importance as it set the precedence for the physical presence of the English officials for conducting the official business of the state, which went against the letter and spirit of the treaty of Amritsar with far reaching consequences. The appointment of Officer on Special Duty

22 Foreign Department Progs., Political, 14th Dec., 1852, Nos. 82-83, NAI.
paved the way for physically manning the administration of the state which culminated in the imposition of the Resident.\textsuperscript{23} (The role of the Officer on Special Duty and the circumstances which led to the establishment of the British Resident in the state shall be discussed in detail in the next chapter.)

The proposal of Viceroy Lord Northbrook in 1875 to appoint a Resident in the state led to a heated debate. It was not only disliked by the Maharaja but there was a serious difference of opinion in the official circles too who argued that the proposed measure was in violation of the Treaty of Amritsar. Argyll, the Secretary of State, referred the question to Political Committee where it was hotly debated. Some officials of the Committee like Frere, Perry and Rawlinson supported the Viceroy’s case, while as Montgomery, Fredric Currie and Clerk strongly protested against it and pointed the impropriety and illegality of the proposed measure.\textsuperscript{24} It was argued that the appointment of the Resident in Kashmir was never contemplated when the treaty of 1846 was concluded. It could only be justified as a “penal measure” in consequence of Maharaja’s disloyalty to the British government or “as a political arrangement arising out of absolute necessity for the preservation of [their] position on the frontier.”\textsuperscript{25} Currie even made a striking disclosure that at the time of the Treaty of Amritsar a promise had been made to the Maharaja “that as long as His Highness remained faithful to the conditions of the treaty and loyal to British government, no interference with his government would be

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Thomas Erskine Perry, Sir Henry Rawlinson and Sir Robert Montgomery were all the members of the India Council and Sir Fredric Currie was the Vice-President of the Council.
\textsuperscript{25} Foreign Department, Secret-E, Currie’s Note, 31 October 1873, No. 15, NAI.
attempted and no Resident established at his capital.\textsuperscript{26} Argyll, while agreeing with Currie that the appointment of the Resident was "virtually a penal measure", expressed the doubts as to the wisdom of adopting such a course, except on the grounds of treachery on the part of the Maharaja.\textsuperscript{27} (The details about the Maharaja's alleged intrigues with Russia against the British are discussed in chapter four).

The charges leveled against the Maharaja in a way provided legal justification for the appointment of the Resident. If it could be only done on the grounds of disloyalty or threat to the security let those very grounds be made available. But how far those charges were well founded determines the justification of the act.

Whatever verbal assurances were given to the Maharaja at the time of the signing of the treaty, the fact is that once Maharaja accepted the appointment of the Officer on Special Duty, the appointment of the Resident was an act only different in degree, not in kind. If the British were the acknowledged supreme power then they owed it to the people of that area as moral and legal responsibility, that wanton oppression is not let loose against them.\textsuperscript{28} However, British intervention was neither out of concern for administrative reforms nor as a fulfillment of the treaty but only in extending their own interests. They could well overlook Maharaja's open violation of the treaty if it served their interests as well. The territories acquired by Gulab Singh in Gilgit, not to speak of those of Ladakh and Baltistan went straight way against the Article IV which clearly

\textsuperscript{26} Currie to Argyll, 27 November 1873, enclosed in Argyll to Northbrook 28 November 1873, Foreign Department, Secret, Nos., 103-05, NAI.

\textsuperscript{27} Foreign Department, Secret-E, Currie's Note, 31 October 1873, No. 15, NAI.

\textsuperscript{28} Foreign Department, Secret, 28\textsuperscript{th} January, 1848, No. 43-A., NAI.
reads that, "The limits of the territory of Maharaja Gulab Singh shall not be at any time changed without concurrence of the British government."^29

The treaty did not provide for all kinds of situations which again helped the British to intervene in the garb of handling new developments. The imposition of the Resident and the establishment of Gilgit Agency were such types of interventions.

Why should the British make distinction between the case of Jawahir Singh (Gulab Singh's nephew) and the case of an unfortunate weaver in Kashmir who may complain of Gulab Singh's oppression? The British had neither had any sympathy with Jawahir Singh nor with the weaver of Kashmir but apparently wanted to take advantage of both as justification for intervention. They immediately used their good office to exhort Gulab Singh to act justly towards his nephew, which in a subtle way conveyed to Maharaja his precariousness. The Kashmiri weaver, on the other hand, would not be heard as that does not seem of any benefit; while his grievances, if allowed to accumulate, will become much more useful for the British in future. The handing over of


As far as the treaty of Amritsar was concerned, Gulab Singh had been given possession of the country situated eastward of the river Indus. As such Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar and Darel and other hilly country situated on the westward of the river could not be deemed to come under the domain of the Maharaja. So when the British Indian government deputed Lt. Vans Agnew and the other members of the Boundary Commission to Gilgit to obtain information about the hilly territories, the tribal chiefs opposed their presence in their territories. The raja of Hunza declared that he would not allow any British or for that matter any Kashmiri official in his territories because by the treaty stipulations they were not authorized to enter there. He referred to the Treaty of Amritsar that the British government had affected transfer to Gulab Singh the country "situated to the eastward of the river Indus and westward of the river Ravi". This clearly reveals that Gulab Singh had no right to cross the Indus with the aim of subjugating Gilgit and other territories. Ladakh and Baltistan had been subdued on behalf of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. As such the Maharaja had no right over Ladakh and Baltistan. What to speak of Gilgit! The British government had given him "all lands and hills between the western side of the river Ravi and the eastern side of the river Indus". As such he had no right to change his boundaries, more so, to cross the river Indus, including Hunza and Nagar. This clearly reveals that the tribesmen believed and which was legally true that the Dogra Maharaja had no legal right to conquer the region. F.M. Hassnain, *Gilgit: The Northern Gate of India*, (New Delhi: 1978), pp. 33-4.
Jammu and Kashmir to Gulab Singh is a case in point. The choice of a Hindu ruler for a Muslim majority state seems deliberate. Exhibiting the anti-Muslim stance characteristic of British officials since the disastrous war against Afghanistan, Lord Hardinge wrote to the Secretary of State: “I have done this on the principle that it is our policy to prefer Hindoo governments, or any race in preference to the Mahommedans on this great entrance into India.”

H.M. Lawrence, the signatory to the Treaty of Amritsar offered his argument against the British taking over Kashmir directly and in favour of handing it over to Gulab Singh. Explaining himself, Lawrence observed that, “[Kashmir] would be a pleasant land for a man to dwell in, but I am not a whit more satisfied after seeing that we were wrong in not taking it... Just now the people would be glad to have us for masters, but being all Mussalmans or Brahmins they would soon prove restive. About four fifths are Mahomedans and would of course kill cows while the minority would be hostile to the measure... between Moollas and Pundits our Raj would not long be declared to be Heaven sent.”

The British policy-makers thought that the Hindu ruler and his Muslim subjects could act as a check on the aspirations of each other. While the ruler would prevent the emotional and political links of the Muslims of the state with Muslim countries like Afghanistan and the intervening Muslim areas, Muslim discontent within the state could always be used by the government of India as an excuse to interfere in its affairs. This consideration later on proved to be an excuse for the British to interfere in the internal affairs of the state.

30 Foreign Department, Sec. Branch, Ref. No.8, 19th March, 1846, NA1.
31 Foreign Secret/Cons. 26 December 1846/no. 1240-1 + K.W., NA1.
The Persian version of the treaty is a literal proof of how it was the English (read British) version or interpretation which finally mattered. The Persian/English version controversy of the Treaty of Amritsar gave final blow to the Maharaja’s reliance on the treaty. Maharaja Pratap Singh drew up a plan to reorganize his administration. The new scheme proposed the appointment of a Council, consultative one, composed of President, Vice President and other members. The appointment of Nilamber Mukherjee, a Bengali, raised controversy. Plowden, the Resident objected to the appointment of Nilamber till the Government of India should have examined the scheme of reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir administration. But the Maharaja claimed that according to Article VII of the Persian version of the treaty of Amritsar, which alone was signed by his grandfather, Maharaja Gulab Singh, he was entitled to appoint any British subject without the consent of the colonial government. He argued that a person was only bound by a document to which he was a party; since his grandfather never signed the English version of the treaty of Amritsar he, as Gulab Singh’s successor, was not bound by its stipulations. Pratap Singh knew, however, that the matter was complicated one; he therefore left it to the government of India for final decision. The Maharaja’s arguments evoked a smart rejoinder from Plowden which was submitted to Durand for consideration of Lord Dufferin’s government. In this Plowden pointed out the fallacy, even the danger, in Pratap Singh’s contention. He argued that if the state of Jammu and Kashmir was bound only by the Persian version of the treaty, by the same reasoning the British government was obliged only to respect its English text, in accordance to which

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32 Interestingly, what Maharaja claimed was totally opposite to the English version of the treaty. Article VII of the English version reads: “Maharaja Gulab Singh engages never to take...any British subject...without the consent of the British Government.” So it was a huge claim on the part of the Maharaja.

33 Maharaja to Plowden, 24 April and 8 May 1888, Foreign Department, Political, Sec. E. March 1889, Cons. 157 and 160, NAI.
the English government had hitherto recognized the Maharajas existence as the ruling chief. In other words, the repudiation by Pratap Singh of the English text of the treaty would at once mean, from the British point of view, the forfeiture of his right to continue as the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir.\textsuperscript{34}

The British declined to permit the employment of Nilamber Mukherjee as member of the council in charge of the revenue administration. As regards the question whether Maharaja was at liberty to employ British subjects without the consent of the Indian government, Plowden was asked to tell him that the interpretation of the treaty of 1846 with regard to this point was no longer open to discussion. Further, the government of India was willing to give the Maharaja every possible assistance in regard to such appointments, but insisted that “they must maintain their right to be consulted” before any British subject was appointed by the Darbar.\textsuperscript{35}

It was clear assertion of the right granted by Article VII of the treaty which clearly barred the Maharaja from employing any British subject or the subject of any European or American state without the consent of the British government.\textsuperscript{36} The provision in a way made Maharaja dependent on the British for any improvement in the administration of the state. It virtually created the situation where British intervention in the internal affairs became “indispensable”. If Maharaja would not be able to employ the experts from outside the state for improvements in revenue administration and other developments, the state “[would] suffer from mal-administration” and become fit case for

\textsuperscript{34} Plowden to Durand, 12 May 1888, Ibid., No. 159, NAI.
\textsuperscript{35} Government of India to Kashmir Resident, Foreign Department, Secret-E, 25 July 1888, encl. in Government of India to Secretary of State, 18 August, 1888, NAI.
\textsuperscript{36} See Appendix 1 for the Article VII of the Treaty of Amritsar.
intervention; if he intended to employ, then he had to consult the British. The experts and technocrats appointed on the British recommendation would be obviously more loyal to the British than to the Maharaja and hence itself become instruments of intervention.

To Sum Up:

The treaty no doubt gave both the parties some rights and obligations. But because of the overwhelming power and prestige of one party over the other, the British always had the upper hand. Since Gulab Singh was at the receiving end, the British were always in a better position to use the provisions of the treaty to their own advantage. More importantly, if the British were recognized by the treaty as arbiters in any dispute arising with the neighbouring states how could their arbitration be challenged with regard to the dispute with the British itself. These inherent contradictions in the treaty gave them the role of both the judge and the jury in any dispute and they successfully gave their every act a legal cover of the treaty.
Chapter Four

Changing Geo-Political Scenario: A Stairway to Ascendancy

The handing over of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh does not seem to have raised his stature in the eyes of the British government. Despite parting of the ways between the Sikhs and the Dogras, the new anti-British movement among the Sikhs led the British to cast a shadow of doubt on the extent of the Dogra Maharaja’s loyalty. The continued presence of Gulab Singh’s sympathizers at the Sikh court and the eruption of an anti-British revolt in Multan led by Mul Raj during April 1848—which set the stage for the Second Anglo-Sikh War—only fuelled the British suspicion. The Multan revolt coincided with that of the Hazara where Chattar Singh raised the standard of rebellion. Chattar Singh sought the assistance of Amir Dost Muhammad of Afghanistan, whom he promised Peshawar in the event of a Sikh victory. The Multan revolt also turned to Gulab Singh for armed assistance. Rumour spread that the Dogras chief had been in clandestine alliance with Chattar Singh and Amir of Afghanistan. This led several European officials to doubt the loyalty of Gulab Singh to the British Empire.

The first major battle of the second Anglo-Sikh War was fought at Chillianwala on 13th January 1849, in which the Sikhs got initial success but the ultimate result was a stalemate. Hearing of the Punjab forces successes Dost Muhammad crossed the Indus and captured the fort of Attock. He sent a force of fifteen hundred men under his son, Akram

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Khan, to assist the Sikhs. Amir of Afghanistan and Sikhs made several appeals to Gulab Sigh for help. Dost Muhammad claimed that Gulab Singh had promised him the financial and military support but when the time for help had come, he refrained. Dost Mohammad wrote to Mul Raj that “if Gulab Singh does not now lend his assistance in supplying us with money, and neglects to join our cause, he will eventually repent it”. He further wrote, “Had Golab Singh shown as much valour and resolution as you have, the Sikhs would now be in possession of the sovereignty of Lahore.”

But the Maharaja's primary concern was the security of his kingdom. Anticipating a new round of Anglo-Sikh fighting, he first of all took precautionary measures by enlarging his army and reinforcing his frontier posts. With regard to the Sikh-Afghan overtures, he made all his calculations before taking a final decision. Joining the conflict on the side of the Sikhs, he thought, would prove suicidal for him. Highly disturbed over the imminent Afghan entry into the conflict, Gulab Singh feared that Dost Muhammad's true motives were not merely to regain Peshawar but also to re-establish the Afghan hegemony over Kashmir. He concluded that the Sikh-Afghan victory over the British

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3 Pointing to the unexpected but apparent Sikh-Afghan alignment and by the desertion of various Dogra regiments to Chattar Singh, James Abbott, the assistant British agent at Hazara, remarked that the loyalty of Gulab Singh was also doubtful. Excerpts from the Diary of Abbott, Dec. 18, 1848, contained in Currie's letter to Elliot, Dec. 28, 1848, quoted in Bawa, Jammu Fox, p. 145.

4 Dost Muhammad's letter to Mul Raj, Jan 18, 1849. This time Mul Raj was already defeated by the British. The letter was intercepted by them. Cited in Bawa, Jammu Fox p. 148.

5 Ibid.

6 There are some references that after not getting any response from Gulab Singh, the Amir of Afghanistan had actually sent his envoys to the several hill chiefs promising rewards in return of their help in restoring the Afghan rule in Kashmir. Warner, The Life of the Marquiss of Dalhousie, vols. 2, (London: 1904), vol. 1, p. 213.
would inevitably enhance the danger of an Afghan invasion of Kashmir. So he decided that his interests would best be served by adopting a cautious pro-British posture while at the same time avoiding direct involvement in the Punjab affairs. To give effect to his plans, Gulab Singh appealed for British assistance in the event of an Afghan aggression on his kingdom. To give a further proof of his loyalty, he forwarded the original communications from Dost Muhammad to Currie and reaffirmed his devotion to the British.

Taking into cognizance all the events and circumstances, Governor-General communicated a carefully worded reply to him. Dalhousie wrote that “if the Maharaja shall really do effective service against the Sikh army now in arms against the British government, or against Dost Mahomed, in the event of that person attempting to aid the Sikh army, he may rest assured that Dost Mahomed will not be permitted to injure him.” He, however, charged Gulab Singh with lack of active support and conveyed a grim warning to the Maharaja that in the case of not playing “expected role”, the British will be compelled to regard His Highness not as a friend, but as, in truth, an enemy; and will proceed in due time, to seize such portions of His Highness's territory as may give reparation for his breach of treaty, and compensate for the expense which will be caused thereby, or to inflict upon His Highness such other punishment as [he] may think suited

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7 Gulab Singh feared that the Sikhs would not treat him sympathetically either. The Sikh victory would inevitably revive at Lahore the painful memories of his role in the first Anglo-Sikh War and encourage a Sikh attempt to regain the Himalayan territories so reluctantly surrendered in 1846.
8 Saif-ud-Din to Currie, July 17, 1848, Mirza Saif-ud-Din “Mirza Saifuddin Papers”, vol. 1, folio 73 2. (Manuscript Section, Research and Publication Department, Srinagar.)
to the faithlessness of [His Highness’] conduct. [He] trusts that the Maharaja, by prompt and vigorous action, will avert this misfortune”.

Gulab Singh maintained his composure despite being hurt by the remarks of Dalhousie casting doubts on his loyalty. He, however, reaffirmed his commitment to the Treaty of Amritsar and indicated his intention of assisting the British even at the risk of jeopardizing his own kingdom. Gulab Singh’s reaffirmation led to a distinct improvement in Anglo-Dogra relations.

The fateful battle of Second Anglo-Sikh war was fought at Gujarat on 21 February 1849, in which some Dogra troops also participated on the side of the British. The Sikhs were finally defeated in the middle of March. The Afghan troops, seeing no prospects of a Sikh victory retreated to their homeland.

Thus in this way Punjab was annexed and the boundaries of the British Indian Empire now directly touched the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The importance of Gulab Singh as an influential chieftain in the eyes of the British somewhat diminished. As is true for the every other empire, the changing geo-political scenario in the north-western regions of the British Indian Empire made the authorities to pursue their policies which would suit the best imperialistic interests. Now the British could pursue any policy forcefully in regard to Kashmir which would suit their best imperialist interests. To meet this end, the focus of the British policy now shifted directly towards Jammu and Kashmir.


11 Bawa, Jammu Fox, p. 150. Acknowledging his gratitude once again for the “bestowal” of the Himalayan province in 1846, he told Currie: “Cashmere, my friend, is not my hereditary country”. By this time, Henry Lawrence had returned as Resident of Punjab but Gulab Singh was not aware about that, so he wrote to Currie.
The British Residency

As early as 1846, the British had received the reports of misgivings or oppression by Maharaja Gulab Singh in Jammu and Kashmir. These reports came handy to the British Indian administration and they started impressing on the Maharaja that they had every right to meddle in the affairs of the Kashmir Darbar. Henry Lawrence, the British Resident at Lahore, who was deputed by the Governor-General to make an on-the-spot enquiry on the reports, impressed upon the Maharaja that the essential condition of his "independence" was his capacity to govern his subjects with justice and equanimity, and his ability to ameliorate their conditions; that "the British Government will not permit any tyranny in Cashmere", and in case the administrative set-up was not reorganized, "some other arrangements will be made for the protection of the hill people." Lawrence also made the Governor General to administer a stern warning to the Maharaja. In his communication, Henry Hardinge blankly told the Maharaja that, "in no case will the British Government be the blind instrument of a ruler's injustice towards his people. and if, inspite of friendly warning, the evil of which the British Government may have just cause to complain, be not corrected, a system of direct interference must be resorted to, which as your Highness must be aware would lower the dignity and curtail the independence of the Ruler".

The establishment of the British rule in Punjab made it easy and safer for the European tourists to travel to the valley of Kashmir. With the result, the flow of tourists to Kashmir greatly increased. The Maharaja offered every possible facility to the visitors.

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12 Translation of a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence to Maharaja Gulab Singh, 29th November, 1847, Foreign Department, Secret, 28th January, 1848, No. 42, NAI.
13 Foreign Department, Secret, 28th January, 1848, 43-A., NAI.
in the valley. However, many of these visitors were frightfully arrogant, acting as if Gulab Singh was personally indebted to each of them for the grant of Kashmir and often proceeding to treat the valley as their own private fief. These officials, we are being told, paid little or nothing for the goods procured from the locals, and one English visitor even made off with money collected from the Kashmiris under false pretenses.

The Maharaja himself “complained that many of the European visitors abused the hospitality displayed towards them, for they were frequently taking with them very large quantities of saffron, and other products of the country, much beyond what they could really use during their sojourn”. With the result, the Maharaja complained to the British Government of the hospitality extended to the tourists being abused. The Maharaja’s complaints provided the British with the much needed opportunity of establishing their political ascendency in the affairs of the Kashmir Darbar and they were thus eager to consider the appointment of a regular British agent there. They thought that if a British officer (ostensibly to deal with the offending Europeans) could be posted in Kashmir, he would, besides keeping them in check, be also able—as contemplated by the Governor-General—to serve “the purpose of making enquiries into the condition of the people, under the Maharaja’s rule and reporting generally upon the state of the country”. This would help them to find more convenient means to control the overall administrative machinery of the state. They quickly responded to the Maharaja’s complaint; but in their

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16 Mir Saifullah, ‘Tarikh-Nama-e-Kashmir’, (Persian Scroll), Research and Publication Department, Srinagar.
17 Honibergcr, Thirty Five Years in the East, pp. 182-3.
18 Ibid.
19 Dalhousie to Sir H. Lawrence, 8 July 1851, Dalhousie Papers/Section 6, No. 98. Quoted in Ghose. Kashmir in Transition, p. 4.
own way. The Governor-General decided to appoint a British officer to stay in the valley for the purpose of looking after the foreign tourists. Initially the Maharaja resisted the move but ultimately made the way for the new officer provided the officer remained in the valley only during the summer months.\(^{20}\) The officer came to be known as the Officer on Special Duty.\(^{21}\)

The officer thus appointed in 1852 was, theoretically, only authorized to arbitrate in any dispute between the authorities of the princely state and the European visitors, and to take cognizance of any oppression or irregularities which could be charged against them.\(^{22}\) Outwardly, therefore, this appointment was of little importance. But keeping in view the real intentions of the Government it was an important constitutional gain, for it was the recognition of the right of the British Indian government to post their officer in the state.\(^{23}\)

Although the British Officer on Special Duty was appointed for a specific purpose, a close vigil was maintained on Kashmir developments through a local agent, Mirza Saif-ud-Din. Mirza was a local Kashmiri employed by the Company to spy on the policies of the Kashmiri Maharajas and the general condition of the state. Saif-ud-Din, through his extensive confidential dispatches, captured in minute detail the everyday

\(^{20}\) Foreign Department, Political, 1852, Nos. 82-83, December, 1852, NAI.

\(^{21}\) Foreign Department, Political, Nos. 82-8, December, 1852; John Lawrence letter to Jawala Sahai the Dewan of Gulab Singh, January 14, 1852, Foreign Department, NAI.

\(^{22}\) John Lawrence mentioned that the Officer on Special Duty had his concern only with the European visitors to Kashmir. He had no right to interfere in the internal administration of the state. He was also not to be the medium of communication between the Maharaja and the Government of India. Foreign Department, Political, 1852, Nos. 82-83, December, 1852, NAI.

\(^{23}\) But it is pertinent to note here that the Officer on Special Duty did not interfere in the internal administration of the Kashmir Darbar; he was more interested and reported regularly regarding the trans-frontier activities of the Maharaja. Memo by C.U. Aitchison, 15 May 1870, Argyll Papers/Reel 312, p. 92, cited by D. K. Ghose, Kashmir in Transition, p. 7.
occurrences during the entire reign of Gulab Singh and the first few years of Maharaja Ranbir Singh’s rule.\textsuperscript{24}

The more British started penetrating into Jammu and Kashmir and knowing about its beauty, the strategic importance and the pathetic conditions the people were living in,\textsuperscript{25} the more they began to lament over the sale of Kashmir to the Dogras.\textsuperscript{26} Most of the Europeans who visited Kashmir or had some professional or other links with it, in a true imperialistic tone advocated the annexation of Kashmir for the British Empire; perhaps none of them “truly” campaigned for its deliverance from the Dogra oppression. Lieut. Colonel Torrens during his visit to Kashmir in 1861 lamented that “No Englishman can

\textsuperscript{24} The confidential dispatches of Mirza Saif-ud-Din, written from Srinagar between 1846 and 1859 to the British authorities at Lahore, forms one of the most important sources for the early history of the Dogra rule, in Jammu and Kashmir. This enormous manuscript, comprising twelve volumes, after its discovery in 1960, has been deposited with Research and Publication Division of Jammu and Kashmir Government. The information in his communications is arranged in chronological order. Each dispatch either bears a specific date or refers to the months it covers. To some degree this work may be compared to the now famous \textit{Umdat\textendash ut\textendash Tawarikh} written by Sohan Lal Suri, who provided extensive eyewitness accounts of the Sikh rule in Punjab. But unlike Suri, Saif-ud-Din was not an official scribe and was prohibited from appearing at Gulab Singh’s court. He collected most of his information through others who were allowed admittance, but claimed he never sent it to the British before verifying it. He also gathered news of events taking place in Srinagar and intelligence reaching the capital from other parts of the Dogra kingdom. His reports, for the most part, must be considered impartial because Saif-ud-Din, whatever his own sentiments toward Gulab Singh, was aware that the British authorities had employed him mainly to acquaint them with the true state of affairs in Kashmir. Consequently, baseless and fabricated accounts could have jeopardized the informer’s credibility with the British upon whom he depended both for his economic and physical security. His writings, therefore, contain both disparaging and commendatory accounts of the rulers of Jammu and Kashmir. Bawa, \textit{Jammu Fox}, pp. 193-4.

It seems that sometime after Saif-ud-Din’s death the British employed his brother, Mirza Muhi-ud-Din to act as the \textit{khufta navis} (secret writer). But no trace of his correspondence has been found. Ibid., p. 236. fn. 13.

Gulab Singh, the first Dogra ruler, was determined to make his power felt throughout his newly founded kingdom. His successors were in no way better than him. The Dogra rulers were greedy for revenue and the taxes were burdensome, with the result the standard of living of the people did not show any positive change. Aggravating to the situation was the fact that though the vast majority of the state happened to be Muslims, they were treated as second class citizens by the rulers and their officers.

leave Kashmir without a sigh of regret that a province so full of promise should ever have been allowed to slip through our fingers." 27 "Surprise has often been expressed," wrote Sir Francis Younghusband, "that when this lovely land had actually been ceded to us, after a hard and strenuous campaign, we should ever have parted with it for the paltry sum of three-quarters of a million sterling." 28

Robert Thorp, a young British Army officer, who visited Kashmir in 1865, openly criticized the ruthless Dogra rule in Kashmir. 29 He also launched a fierce attack on the British government for selling Kashmir to Gulab Singh. 30 It was urged that a policy which suited to the complete growth of the Empire, and not the prevailing attitude of non-interference with "Native States", should be adopted, so that "the Queen's supremacy which was unquestioned in fact could as well be recognized in form by the Kashmir Prince". 31

The Dogra Maharajas, who ruled Jammu and Kashmir on sectarian lines, backed and supported the interests of the Dogras and the Kashmiri Hindus while as the Muslims who were largely concentrated in the valley of Kashmir were left out. The British Indian government which was acting as a paramount power had made a "promise" as early as 1847 that "in no case [would] the British government be the blind instrument of a Ruler's

29 Robert Thorp had come to visit the birth place of his mother—as she belonged to Kashmir,— but moved by the dilapidated and miserable condition of the Kashmiris, he decided to raise his voice against the oppressive Dogra rule. He wrote extensively to the British press about the misgovernment in Kashmir. This apparently did not suit the autocratic Dogra regime. He died in mysterious circumstances on November 21, 1868.
30 Robert Thorp wrote that "...in no portion of the treaty made with Gulab Singh was the slightest provision made for the just or humane government of the people of Cashmere and others upon whom we forced a government which they detested." Robert Thorp, *Cashmere Misgovernment*, (London: 1870), p. 60.
31 Ibid., p. 64.
injustice towards his people...”; but the “promise” was not fulfilled which gave rise to the public resentment. The callous attitude of the British was disapproved both in Indian and British circles and it was this “public” resentment which prompted the British Indian Government to intervene, but this does not follow that the intervention was still primarily meant to alleviate the conditions of poor masses of Kashmir.

The mishandling by the Dogras of the famine of 1877-9 shone the spotlight particularly brightly on the plight of the Kashmiri Muslims. A section of British and British-Indian press came to the fore to highlight the grievances and oppression on the people of Kashmir by the Dogra Darbar. Newspapers in the Punjab, particularly those owned by the Muslims, were unrelenting in their criticism of the Dogra state and also of the British for having permitted such gross neglect by a protected prince. In the name of “humanity” the annexation of the valley was suggested by some, while others urged the British Government to intervene “effectively” in order to afford the people some immediate relief.

Some Muslims in the valley had made their own attempt to voice their discontent with prevailing famine conditions. In 1877 some “unknown” Kashmiris had submitted a memorandum to the Viceroy. It was never published but sections of it had made their way into the accounts of some British writers and into the Indian press. The accusations

33 In 1877-9 Kashmir was hit by a famine liked to the Great Famine of British India that spread from South to North India in the year 1876-8. However, in the case of Kashmir it was not the failure of moonsoons, but instead an abundance of the rains that destroyed the crops, which was left to rot in the fields due to the rigid revenue mechanism that prevented peasants from harvesting grain until a revenue official was present at the site. See, Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, pp. 214-18. The newspapers which highlighted the devastation caused by the famine are: Civil and Military Gazette, 5 Sept. 1878, p.1; The Times, 25, 27, and 30 August, 1879. Newspaper cuttings in Pros. No. 211/Part B, Home Department (Public)/ February 1879, NAI.
34 Newspaper cuttings in Pros. No. 211/Part B, Home Department (Public)/ February 1879, NAI.
of maladministration levied in it were of the gravest character. The most serious charge made was that “in order to save the expense of feeding his people” Maharaja Ranbir Singh had preferred to drown boat-loads of Muslims in the Wular Lake. The British government had taken these allegations seriously enough to appoint a commission of enquiry but Kashmiri Muslims had, supposedly, been too frightened to come forward to provide corroboration.\textsuperscript{35} Although the Maharaja was exonerated, the outrage aroused by this advertisement of the shocking conditions of the valley’s Muslims called for some measure of intervention by the colonial government. Even more critically, the Kasmar Darbar’s attitude during the famine had demonstrated its incapacity to rise above the preferential treatment of its already privileged Hindu subjects to the detriment of Muslim cultivators who were the greatest sufferers.

The press also raised the point that the acquisition of Gilgit and Yasin by the Maharaja was in contravention of the Treaty of Amritsar.\textsuperscript{36} It advised the Government that the Maharaja’s annexationist policy should be stalled and he should be asked to discharge his feudatory duties so long exempted.

Among the other factors which prompted a serious reconsideration of the colonial policy of non-interference in Kashmir was the British failure in the Afghan war. “After this ill-starred campaign of 1878”, the pressure grew on the government to have a more tight vigil of the north-western frontier regions.\textsuperscript{37} “The key to India [was] as much Kabul as Cashmere; we should render the ruler of Cashmere to be fully subservient to our

\textsuperscript{35} Bazaz, \textit{The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir}, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{36} Gadru, \textit{Kashmir Papers}, p. 3.
This, they thought would be done by having a control over the Kashmir affairs through a Resident. In 1884, Lord Ripon argued that the appointment of the Resident was important both for assisting and supervising reforms and also to obviate the disturbances on the Afghan frontier. The frontier and foreign policies pursued by the rulers of Kashmir also came under fire.

Thus, the mal-administration of the Kashmir Darbar, the changing geo-political nature in the north-western region of the British Indian Empire, the ruthless criticism of the Anglo-Indian and British press and the political nature of the activities of the Officer on Special Duty combined to form a pressure on the Dogra rulers which made it easy for the British authorities to provide for efficient political ascendency and supervision, not only in the “interests” of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, but more importantly, to safeguard the British imperial interests.

38 Gadru, Kashmir Papers, p. 41.
39 Ibid., p. 126.
40 The Afghan and later on the Russian threat on the north-western border began to occupy the British government with the increasing urgency. In 1880, the Afghan Amir declared that Chirral was a part of the Afghan territory. This made the British close in on the Kashmir Darbar. N.N. Raina. Kashmir Politics and Imperialist Manoeuvres, 1846-1980, (New Delhi: 1988), pp. 35-7; Foreign Dept., Sec. E, Pros. May 1884, nos. 354-57, N.A.I.
41 Maharaja Ranbir Singh’s attack on Shahdullah fort in the frontier region of Korakuram in 1865-66 was considered by the British Indian Government the breach of agreement signed by them with Gulab Singh. They thought it to be very dangerous for their Indian Empire for it would “involve the Government of India into a war; with Turkistan, or Bokhara, or with Russia herself.” Thorp, Kashmir Misgovernment. The papers are in the edited form in S.N. Gadru’s Kashmir Papers, pp. 90-2.
42 The result was that the powers and position of the Officer on Special Duty were increased bit by bit with each new viceroy. He was designated Political Agent and Justice of Peace in 1872. During the viceroyalty of Northbrook the Officer’s stay in 1874 was extended to eight months and he was further allowed to deal with the affairs of Central Asia. Till 1877 the affairs of Kashmir state were conducted through the Punjab Government; the Government of India took over the direct charge in the same year. The Government of Punjab was thus divested of the charge of the Kashmir affairs. This was prelude to the appointment of the Resident. Maharaja to Punjab Governor, 16 April 1874, No. 5, N.A.I; Foreign Department. Progs., Sec. Nos. 518-525 (K.W.), No. 525, Dec. 1881, NAI.
The British finally intervened in the administration of Jammu and Kashmir at the accession of Maharaja Pratap Singh who ascended the throne in September 1885 at the death of his father Maharaja Ranbir Singh (his death provided the British with an opportunity for direct intervention as the new Maharaja was not as redoubtable as his father). The new Maharaja, Pratap Singh was asked to withdraw his agent from the headquarters of the Government of India, as all political relations with the Kashmir Government in future would be carried out through the British Resident, the recognized representative of the Government of India. Pratap Singh vehemently protested against the new arrangement but Lord Dufferin conveyed to him that the decision was final. He, however, 'assured' the Maharaja that the appointment of a Resident was not a penal measure, and should in no way be considered 'derogatory to the dignity of the Kashmir State'. He 'could not see how an arrangement, which had been accepted by all the great feudatories of the Queen, could lower the prestige of the ruler of Kashmir.' The Governor-General stated that Pratap Singh should regard the officer 'neither as governing authority, nor as a pedagogue, but as a friend and an advisor'.

The Government of India also impressed upon the new Maharaja that there was a dire need to overhaul the defunct administrative machinery of the state. A wide range of reforms were needed to be introduced in Jammu and Kashmir. These included the introduction of a lighter assessment of revenue to be collected preferably in cash; the abolition of the system of revenue farming; the cession of state monopolies; the revision

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43 The Maharaja's Agent or Vakil hitherto carried out the communication with the Government of India. With the appointment of the Resident, he was set aside.
44 Political and Secret Letters, 1/45, p. 1-19, Durand to St. John, October 5, 1885, enclosure 21 in Government of India to Secretary of State, October 18, 1885.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
of existing taxes; the reforms in the educational sector; a reorganization of the army; a
system of proper financial control; improvements in the judicial administration of the
state; and the construction of proper roads. These reforms were demanded by the
colonial government in the name of impressing upon the Kashmir government "its
obligations to its own subjects", and it was made clear to the Maharaja that he would not
be permitted to dodge these reforms. The initiation of these reforms was, however, left to
Maharaja Pratap Singh.48

The establishment of the Residency gave a wide leverage of powers to the British
government in the administrative affairs of Kashmir. Taking a further dig on the
Maharaja's authority, the persons of their own choice were recommended to be appointed
by the government of India ostensibly to reorganize the Kashmir administration. The
Maharaja was almost forced to appoint Lachman Dass as the Prime Minister of the state.
The new Prime Minister along with the other ministers and with the full backing of
Plowden, the Resident, began to show his authority. A check was placed on the
Maharaja's extravagance by depriving him of his right to sign public bonds
independently.49 Two of the private servants of Maharaja Pratap Singh, Miran Bakhsh
and Sawal Singh were accused of the financial irregularities of the state funds and were
thus prosecuted. Maharaja's efforts to save them led to an open rupture between him and
his council of ministers. Pratap Singh complained bitterly both to the Viceroy and the
Resident that his council had been acting like a Council of Regency and treating him like
a minor; that although he would "like very much to have a Council" to advise him, he

47 Foreign Department, Sec. E, Pros. October 1886/no. 725, NAI.
48 Ibid.
49 Foreign Department, Sec. E, March 1887, NAI.
was thoroughly dissatisfied with the present one. The crisis was however temporarily averted by Plowden's intervention.50

The conflict again revived, this time between Diwan Lachman Dass and the brothers of the Maharaja—Raja Amar Singh and Raja Ram Singh. Maharaja took the side of his brothers, and declared on March 19, 1888 the dismissal of the Diwan from his office. The decision was communicated to the British Resident. This provided the Resident an opportunity to complain against the Dogra Darbar. He wrote to the higher authorities that it was now time “for the Government of India to reconsider the entire situation”. The question, he emphasized, was what form of government should now be constituted. Personally, he believed that a drastic reduction of the Maharaja’s authority was an essential preliminary to any form of government in Jammu and Kashmir. Pratap Singh might reign but must not govern: that was the demand made by him.51

Plowden recommended a complete reconstitution of the Kashmir government. “Until the entire Kashmir establishment had been recast, and the honest and the competent servants substituted for the fraudulent and incapable men now employed, no reforms could be carried out, nor could any mere alteration of the form of government be of any use.” 52 Among other things, he prescribed the immediate removal of the “corrupt and mischievous officers who [were] at the bottom of most of the intrigues”, and in their place the “appointment of the trained Indian officials who could be trusted to carry out the orders given out to them.”53 Plowden remarked that he anticipated an

50 Plowden to Cunningham, 14 Feb. 1887, Foreign Department, Sec. E, April 1887, Pros. 510-2, NAI.
51 Ghose, Kashmir in Transition, p. 65.
53 Ibid.
objection which, he foresaw, was likely to be raised—that of interference in the internal affairs of an Indian state. Notwithstanding, he argued, that the British government was pledged not to interfere with the internal affairs of a princely state, a clear case of unavoidable interference had occurred in Kashmir. “The continuing misgovernment”, he wrote, “had produced evil consequences to the people, and, though a wide margin of time and opportunity had been allowed, there seemed no hope whatever that State, unaided, would be able to settle its own affairs.” Further, “the condition of Kashmir affected countries on its northern border beyond its limits, and thus became an injurious and disturbing element in the Imperial scheme of frontier defence.” He concluded that “a strict adherence to the principle of non-interference would merely prolong the local disorder and maladministration” in Kashmir, and therefore to check its mischievous course, a decided and effectual interference had become a necessity.

Though the government of India considered the action of the Dogra ruler without their previous consultations to be absolutely improper, but Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, was not happy with the Resident too.

Prejudging the stiffening attitude of the British Indian government, Pratap Singh drew up a scheme of reorganizing his administration and sent it to Lord Dufferin for his consideration. Although the government of India accepted the Maharaja’s scheme of

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54 Ibid.
55 Writing to the Secretary of State, Dufferin wrote, “I am not satisfied with the condition of public affairs in the State. We have tried Agent after Agent there, and none of them had done well. The fact is that our politicals are a very poor lot...They are devoid of any real energy.” Dufferin to Lord Cross, Foreign Department, Sec. E, Pros. 89, 16 April 1888, NAI.
56 The scheme proposed the appointment of a consultative Council, composed of a President, a Vice President, three Members and a Secretary. The Maharaja chose himself to be the President of the proposed Council. Gadru, Kashmir Papers, pp. 219-21.
reorganization, they made a forgone conclusion that the scheme would likely prove a failure, "partly on account of His Highness's personal character and partly for other reasons". The British government, however, decided "to allow the Maharaja a further opportunity of showing whether he [was] competent to discharge the duties of a responsible ruler."

The India Office was more skeptical about the success of the new arrangement but admittedly their official attitude seconded the Government of India's decision, however, with the apt remark that if the present arrangement failed, and it became necessary "[t]hereafter to remove the Maharaja as incapable of ruling his State, it w[ould] not be possible to charge the Indian Government with acting in an arbitrary manner or without having giving Maharaja every chance of showing that he possessed the will and capacity to govern his Kingdom wisely".

Matters really came to a head during the tenure of Colonel Parry Nisbet—who succeeded Plowden as the Resident of Jammu and Kashmir—when a batch of 34 letters, allegedly written by Maharaja Pratap Singh, disclosing his treasonable correspondence with Russia and of plotting the assassination of Plowden, the erstwhile Resident, as also of his own brothers, the Rajas Ram Singh and Amar Singh, "fell" in the hands of Nisbet. Nisbet submitted matter to Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy, who instructed that Nisbet should first hold a full inquiry into the matter. But the Resident was in no mood to

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57 Ibid., pp. 222-3. Emphasis mine.
58 Ibid.
60 Of late there had developed animosity between the Maharaja and his two brothers.
make any further investigation, and urged Durand, the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, to take his word for it that the letters were undoubtedly genuine. He further wrote that "it [would] be politically dangerous to leave the actual administration of this great State in the hands of an individual who may play us false at any moment, without, perhaps, appreciating the disaster that would follow"; so the Government of India should, without any further delay, directly interfere into the affairs of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Government of India concurred with the observations of their man-on-the-spot and decided to divest Maharaja Pratap Singh of all his powers. The Maharaja was presented with an *irshad* (order) which forced him to "voluntarily" abdicate his powers to govern even while he was allowed to continue as the titular chief of the state. A State Council, whose members were appointed by the Government of India, was formed to take over the administration of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Council consisted of the Maharaja's two brothers, Ram Singh and Amar Singh, two of his ministers, Pandit Suraj Koul and Rai Bahadur Bhag Ram, and a British officer nominated by the Government of India. And although the Council was given full powers of administration, it was "expected to exercise these...under the guidance of the Resident... [taking] no step of importance without consulting him, and follow[ing] his advice whenever it may be offered".

The decision of stripping the Maharaja of his powers was not based on mere evidence of the letters, but there was more to this action on the part of the British

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63 Foreign Dept., Sec. E, Pros. August 1889/ nos. 80-98, NAI. See also, Digby, *Condemned Unheard*, p. 156.
government. As it has already been mentioned that the Secretary of State and the Resident Plowden had a year before made it clear that they had serious reservations about the Maharaja’s ability to rule citing his failure of implementing the reforms he had promised at the time of his accession.\(^{64}\) The correspondence between Col. Nisbet and the several officials of the British Indian government also shows that the Indian authorities had already made up their mind to dethrone the Maharaja. Lansdowne and Durand attached little importance to the “episode of letters”. They thought that the discovery of these letters just betrayed the “incapacity [of the maharaja] to govern th[e] State”. The Viceroy believed that the “episode of letters” should make the occasion for a radical change in the state, though not its main justification. He made it clear that whatever the measures taken, they should be adopted on grounds of protracted misgovernment in the state.\(^{65}\) It was in regard to “the interests of the people of Kashmir, and for the ruling family itself” that the colonial government “no longer [considered] it right or possible to leave the affairs in the hands of the Maharaja.”\(^{66}\) In the light of the aforementioned correspondence, the British government appeared to have decided to deprive the Maharaja of all effective authority almost a year before the actual “abdication”. They were just looking for an opportunity which the forged letters provided. In this way Jammu and Kashmir virtually passed under the direct control of Government of India.

The news of the Maharaja’s deposition generated a mixed reaction in different quarters. Some Anglo-Indian newspapers supported the official line while as the Indian press criticized the action as “unethical, outrageous and uncalled for” and attacked the

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\(^{64}\) Digby, Condemned Unheard, pp. 146-7.

\(^{65}\) Foreign Dept., Sec. E, April 1889, Pros. 80-89, K.W.I., NAI.

\(^{66}\) Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, Fort William, dated 3 April 1889, reproduced in William Digby, Kashmir Papers, pp. 155-6.
irshad (order) which forced Pratap Singh to abdicate the throne. Amrita Bazar Patrika even published an article which concluded that “His Highness was deposed not because he...oppressed his people, but because Gilgit was wanted for strategical purposes by the British Government.”\(^6\) Charles Bradlaugh, the member of the House of Commons in England, and William Digby of the Indian Political Agency, demanded that an enquiry should be made by a Select Committee in to the circumstances which led to the resignation of Maharaja Pratap Singh.\(^6\) Bradlaugh even moved the adjournment in the House of Commons on the question of Maharaja’s suppression. He asked a series of questions regarding this matter. He complained that the Maharaja had been condemned unheard in spite of his appeal to the Government of India for a fair trial.\(^6\)

The Maharaja appealed to the British Indian government for the restoration of his powers. The Maharaja complained that he had been “extremely misrepresented to the Government of India by his enemies, chiefly, Amar Singh.” He appealed to the Viceroy “to give [him] a fair trial in order to see what [he] is capable of doing for the furtherance of the interests of the Supreme Government and the prosperity of [his] State... provided [he is] allowed full strength and independence to choose [his] own councilors and

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\(^6\) Pioneer and Civil and Military Gazette supported the action while as Akhbar-i-Am and Amrita Bazar Patrika vehemently denounced the government action; A Minute on Gilgit Defence by Sir Mortimer Durand was also reproduced in the article which was published in Amrita Bazar Patrika. 3 October 1889, p. 6.

\(^6\) William Digby wrote a long letter to U.K. Shuttleworth, sometime the Under Secretary of State for India. The letter, mainly a resume, in defence of the Dogras, is reappraisal of the British policy of aggrandizement which finally led to the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh. The letter took the form of a book when it was published under the title “Condemned Unheard”, in 1890. Gadru, Kashmir Papers, p. xxxv.

\(^6\) The series of questions asked in the house, their replies and the other relevant documents have been reproduced in William Digby, Condemned Unheard, pp. 30-40.
ministers,...and British Resident [should] support and strength [his] hands". However, the reply from the Government of India was somewhat different. Lord Lansdowne communicated to the Maharaja that there was no sufficient reason that would justify a reversal of the decision of the Government of India. He made it clear to Pratap Singh that he was satisfied with the intervention of the paramount power. The Viceroy, therefore, advised him to accept the decision and "entreat [His] Highness to show to the people of Kashmir, as well as to the Government of India, by bearing in a dignified manner the loss of power which [he had] sustained." The Viceroy informed Pratap Singh that the arrangement was "not a permanent one", but his restoration would "depend upon [his] own conduct in the meanwhile".

Maharaja Pratap Singh spent sixteen years appealing to the British Indian government for the restoration of his powers. On the eve of the visit of Lord Lansdowne to Kashmir in October 1891, the Resident in Kashmir suggested that some powers of Maharaja could be restored provided he promised to be guided by the Resident in all the matters. Accordingly, he was offered the presidency of the Council which he readily accepted. In 1902, the viceroy, Lord Curzon, while not out-rightly rejecting the Maharaja’s requests, had repeated that the full restitution would depend on the Maharaja himself.

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70 Maharaja of Kashmir to Marquess of Lansdowne, May 14, 1889, reproduced in Digby, Condemned Unheard, pp. 171-2.
71 The Governor-General of India to the Maharaja of Kashmir, June 28, 1889, reproduced in Digby, Condemned Unheard, p. 176.
72 Speech of Prideaux quoted in The Times of India, 26 Oct, 1891.
73 Foreign Department, (Secret E) Pros. December 1902/no. 112, NAI.
In 1905 the Council was finally abolished when Maharaja was empowered to appoint his ministers in consultation with, and the final approval of the Government of India. He was still bound not to take any “step of importance without consulting [the Resident]”.

The powers of the Maharaja were fully restored to him in 1924. Though the British Resident continued to remain stationed at the Kashmir Darbar till the British vacated the Indian subcontinent, but he was marginalized to a great extent. The readiness, with which the Government of India relaxed their grip over the administration of Jammu and Kashmir, was actuated by a new dimension which the politics of India had assumed. The British were frantically building the princely states into a powerful bulwark against the Indian national movement which had now entered a decisive phase of its development.

Impact of the British Ascendancy: The Land Settlement, Commerce, Educational Reforms

The British ascendancy on the political affairs of Jammu and Kashmir was presented not merely as a strategic move to protect the British Indian Empire, but to alleviate the misery of the people of Kashmir by reforming the administration. Soon after its establishment, the Residency persuaded the Maharaja to accept a land settlement in the valley of Kashmir. In 1887, A. Wingate was appointed to carry out this much-needed task. It is here that the significance of British perception of the economic structures of Kashmir becomes apparent. Following from the traditions of the colonial government in British India throughout the nineteenth century, Wingate made a strong argument in favor

of granting occupancy rights to Kashmiri peasants. According to him, the land revenue system in place in the Valley had left the coffers of the state empty because of the existence of the class of officials between the state and the peasantry. Additionally, it had created an itinerant peasantry with no interest in cultivating the land. Therefore, the Commission suggested, to replenish revenue, and to convert a discontented and thriftless peasantry into a contented, thriving community, peasants had to be given interest in the land they cultivated. To achieve this, Wingate argued, it was necessary to fix the state demand at a fair sum for a term of years and a system of accounts established which would confine the powers of the tehsildars to revenue collection. Another aspect of the changes suggested by Wingate, which was to have far reaching consequences for the social structure of the city of Srinagar, was the release of the grain market from the monopoly of the State. Wingate clearly disagreed with the collection of revenue in kind, which allowed for the State to fix prices of grain and act as the sole grain trader in the Valley. According to him, the price of shali (unhusked rice) had to rise and fall with the outturn of the harvest, because as soon as it got scarce, huge profits were made by the officials in charge of collection. However, although he proposed in his settlement rules for the Valley that the settlement should be made in cash, Wingate allowed for the Darbar “upon report by the Settlement Officer to accept whole or part of the assessment in shali under defined conditions…” Wingate suggested that the settlement rules declare the state as ultimate proprietor, and at the same time confer the right of occupancy on all persons entered as occupants at the time of settlement jamabandi (assessment). It is essential to note that Wingate’s arguments were designed to bolster the authority of the

76 Ibid., p. 18.
77 Ibid., 34.
state through the foundation of a peasantry willing to pay land revenue and determined to defend their lands against encroachments.

Walter Lawrence, who took over from Wingate as Settlement Commissioner in 1890, followed the principles introduced by his predecessor in the land settlement of the Valley. According to the Lawrence Settlement, as it came to be known, permanent hereditary occupancy rights were bestowed on every person who, at the time of assessment or at the time when the distribution of assessments was effected, agreed to pay the assessment fixed on the fields entered in his or her name in the settlement papers. And so long as the assessment was paid, the occupant could not be ejected. However, the right to occupancy was not alienable by sale or mortgage. He argued that giving cultivators the right to alienate their land would create a class of middlemen who would procure land for themselves and rich urban individuals. He records that he “came across cases where whole villages [had] been sold for paltry sum of Rs. 50 and Rs. 60.” This persuaded him to form a strong opinion that “the Kashmiri cultivators [did] not yet understand the value of land or rights in land, [and he], therefore, fear[ed] that the right to sell or to mortgage land would be the signal for extensive alienations; and that in a few years large properties would be acquired either by the officials, or by the more influential Musalman lambardars”.

“I hold strongly”, wrote Lawrence, “that the State should avoid, as far as possible, the creation of middlemen, and I regard the proposal to give the rights of sale and mortgage to ignorant and inexperienced cultivators as the surest way

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74 The Settlement entered only cultivated land as in the occupancy of the assamis; the waste and fallow lands being recorded as khalsa, or State land. Out of this waste-land, however, 10% was to be left for collective usage, such as grazing. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 427.
75 Lambardar, or the village headman, was responsible for collecting the revenue under his control; was paid 5 per cent of the total revenue collected. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 447.
towards the creation of the middlemen". He advised that "the Darbar should not bestow the right to sell, mortgage, or transfer until it [was] satisfied that the occupants [were] capable of properly using this right."

Further, the revenue assessment was fixed for a period of ten years, to be paid partly in cash and partly in kind, depending on the produce of the village. Lawrence stressed in his assessment report that the revenue should be wholly in cash, but he faced a strong opposition by the Dogra administration. It appears that there were two reasons for the officials and the influential classes to fiercely oppose a cash settlement. The first reason was that the collection of revenue in kind gave employment to a large number of Pandits (Kashmiri Hindus), and also gave them great opportunities for perquisites and peculation. The men who were responsible for the collection of revenue (at village level) took sometimes as much as one-fifth in excess of the legal state demand. Further, they would adulterate the grain on its way to Srinagar. The class of revenue officials, thus, had the reason to oppose the land settlement of the Valley. These officials had been reduced—by the new assessment—from all powerful individuals with huge amounts of grain and land under their control, to mere bureaucrats in the employ of the State.

The second reason for the Dogra Darbar's opposition was the issue of the supply of grain to the city of Srinagar. The city population which was mainly associated with the shawl trade and was an important source of the state income was supplied with cheap grain.
grains by the state. However, by the time Lawrence took over as the Settlement Officer, the shawl trade was on the decline; but the city people who were accustomed to get the shali at cheap rates demanded the supply of cheap grains to continue. The financial crisis due to the declining shawl trade had further made them dependable on the state. This prompted the Dogra administration to decline the proposal of Lawrence to accept a purely cash settlement.

Besides the actual cultivated land the people possessed other assets which had always been liable to taxation by the state, such as walnut trees, fruit trees, apricots and apricot oil, and honey. Lawrence made a provision in his settlement that the taxes on all these items should be included in the land revenue, except the pony and sheep taxes. Additionally, Lawrence attempted to reform the system of collection, storage and sale of state grain.

In the first round of the settlement only the khalisa (state owned) land in Kashmir was assessed. The jagir lands came under assessment only in the mid-1890s when Capt. J. L. Kaye was appointed as the Settlement Commissioner. He laid down the rules for

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84 In 1871 there were some 24,000 persons employed in the manufacture of shawls. In that year the value of the land revenue taken in kind was Rs. 16, 93,077, and the revenue taken in cash was only Rs. 9, 62,057. But the state derived revenue of 6, 00,000 from taxation on shawls and Rs. 1, 13,916 from taxes on city shopkeepers. From a financial point of view there were some excuses for taking a large proportion of the land revenue in kind. The losses attending collections in kind were more than balanced by the handsome income so easily collected from the shawl-workers”. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, pp. 440-1.

85 From the time immemorial, the state invariably kept a reserve of grain for the town of Srinagar, making supplies at rates far below the market price of staples. Depending on the bounty of the state, the people naturally neglected to avail themselves of the benefits of the self-help, and their happiness was centered in the fullness of the state godowns and the readiness with which supplies were issued from them. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, pp. 440-1.

86 Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, pp. 437-43.
governing jagir lands in Kashmir. This resulted in the curtailment of the powers of the jagirdars and the revenue farmers (in whose hands the estates of jagirdars had fallen). Kaye clearly suggested the active interference of the state in jagir holdings, along with specifying the status of jagirdars and the tenants on these holdings. Sanads, or land deeds were now to be prepared for each jagir, which specified its precise area and value, the term for which, and the conditions under which the grant had been made. Jagirdars, it was stated, were no more than mere assignees of state revenue, and the tenants in jagir tracts were as much tenants of the Darbar and entitled to protection as any of its other subjects. Jagirdars, on the other hand, were not given occupancy or proprietary rights to their estates. The report argued that the jagirdar, to whom the revenue derived from certain lands had been assigned by the Darbar, could not possibly be a tenant: "The jagirdar stands in place of the Darbar as the collector or assignee of this revenue.

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87 Jagirdars formed part of the steadily declining landed elite of the Kashmir Valley. There were several reasons for this decline, all of which were related to economic conditions of the pre-settlement period. The jagirdars had farmed out their lands to revenue farmers, which ultimately seems to have led to severe indebtedness and the impoverishment of the jagir lands. Additionally, the state had lost control over the parceling out of the jagir lands, and over the ways in which they were inherited. This had led to the division of jagir lands among the numerous heirs of a certain jagirdar without reference to any rule. Zutshi, Languages of Belonging, p. 95.

88 Colonial officials in British India regarded jagir lands as most detrimental to the interests of the agriculturists, particularly when farmed out to revenue contractors, which according to them, led to an internal confusion of village tenures. Jagirdars in Kashmir had also assigned portions of their lands to revenue farmers. Additionally, the state had lost control over the parceling out of jagir lands, and over the ways in which they were inherited. This had led to the division of jagir lands among the numerous heirs of a certain jagirdar without reference to any rule. According to the settlement officials, thus, jagirs had been fragmented into several small holdings run by jagirdars who had no influence or respect. Although the British presented this as a recent phenomenon that was ruining jagir lands, there are several instances of jagirdars farming their lands out to revenue contractors during the Mughal period. In fact, in 1694, it was reported to the Mughal emperor that some of his mansabdars, who had jagirs in Kashmir, were farming them on to local men. Although the Mughal court disapproved of this practice, there was nothing to prevent a jagirdar from sub-assigning part of his jagir to any of his officials or troopers. See Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707, (Bombay: 1963), pp. 328-29.

only...Under the grant he has absolutely no connection with the land, only with the revenue derived from it."^90 Just as the Darbar could not be its own tenant in Khalisa (state owned) villages, according to Kaye, so too jagirdars could not claim occupancy rights that belonged to peasants. Furthermore, Kaye mentioned that jagirdars had no right to collect taxes or to make the villagers pay for items of expenditure which were purely personal, thus cutting short the formidable list of taxes extracted by jagirdars from their peasants. In the same tone, the report also denied jagirdars any right to the wastelands that they had included with their original grants over the years.^91

Thus, Capt. J.L. Kaye’s assessment of jagirs brought all jagir lands in line with the land settlement in the rest of Kashmir Valley. Jagirdars had been curbed and the revenue famers had been rendered ineffective. The conferral of occupancy rights on cultivators effectively curbed the powers of the jagirdars’ to evict them at will.

The significance of state intervention in jagir lands under the British ascendancy lies in the fact that it threatened the financial and social bases of the Kashmiri landed elite for the first time, replacing them with a non-Kashmiri, predominantly Hindu landholding class. Colonial records, such as the 1901 census, recorded that many landed families of note had lost wealth as a result of the “better administration”, which had led to a loss of their power and influence, “birth alone, nowadays, being no qualification for employment in the civil service of the State.”^92

^90 Ibid., p. 13.
^91 Ibid.
The Kashmiri peasantry, on the other hand, seems to have benefitted to some extent from the settlement, and the Village gradually claimed its position in the economy of the State. Several writings from the period note the increasing prosperity of the peasantry as a result of the settlement. Though the description given by Lawrence may be an exaggeration, the assertion that the peasantry was firmly established in this period can hardly be denied. The confidence inspired by the conferral of occupancy rights on assamis led to a gradual return of fugitives to their lands, not only from other villages in Kashmir but also from the Punjab. Deserted villages, we are being told, were resettled as whole families returned to till their lands. A contemporary account places the number of families returning from the Punjab in particular village to be at 23. More and more waste lands were cultivated, "fields fenced, orchards planted, vegetable gardens stocked and mills constructed". The 1901 census noted that the cultivators were better off than before and enjoyed peace and prosperity as a result of the settlement and considerable areas had been converted into flourishing fields during the last decade. Not only was the

93 Walter Lawrence mentions that after the settlement operations "Kashmir is now more prosperous and more fully cultivated. The agriculturists, who used to wander from one village to another in quest of the fair treatment and security which they never found, are now settled down to their lands and permanently attached to their ancestral villages. The revenue is often paid up before the date on which it falls due, and whereas in 1884 it was necessary to maintain a force of... soldiers for the collection of the revenue, now the tehsil chaprasi (peon) rarely visits a village. Every assami knows his revenue liabilities in cash and in kind, and he quickly and successfully resists any attempt to extort more than the amount entered in his revenue-book. The annual dread that sufficient food-grain would not be left for the support of himself and his family has ceased, and the agricultural classes of Kashmir are...at the present time as well off in the matter of food and clothing as any agriculturalists in the world." Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmr, pp. 450-1. These statements are certainly highly exaggerated because if the settlement led to so much improvement in the condition of the peasantry, why would there be resentment among them even after the settlement restored to them their just rights? In fact, we see that the people launched movements to redress their economic and political grievances during the late 19th century and by the turn of the 20th century.

94 Ibid., p. 433.


peasant not at the mercy of the revenue officials, but he was in a position to sell his surplus grain to urban grain traders, thus entering the sphere of legitimate and lucrative trade. More importantly, peasants were now a recognizable class whose interests became the focal point of movements that were to emerge in Kashmir at the turn of the twentieth century.

It is essential to note, however, that the reforms initiated under the auspices of the British colonial government made the peasantry as well as the urban poor more vulnerable to the market. If the peasantry had been released from the grip of the officials, payment of revenue in cash meant that it was now connected to the larger economic system, and affected by its downturns and upturns. The new settlement made the peasants the tenants of the state by officially converting their hereditary rights into occupancy rights, liable to being ejected from their land and losing their occupancy rights if they were unable to pay the revenue. Moreover, the access of the shawl weavers to cheap grain was further restricted as the state began to lose control over the grain trade. The artisans, for their part, not only lost access to cheap State grain, but were now at the mercy of grain traders, who now stood between the consumer and the market. The economic system of the Valley had been transformed from a tightly controlled state monopoly into a market-driven system, which the Dogra state found impossible to direct.

The direct British interference also influenced the other aspects of the life of people in Jammu and Kashmir. The State was by no means either economically or culturally isolated from the outside world prior to the establishment of the Residency and the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh. A brisk trade in commodities such as salt, cloth,

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97 Khan, Census of India, 1901, p. 10.
tea, metals, and tobacco was carried on by the people of Jammu and Kashmir as they migrated seasonally particularly between the Kashmir Valley and the plains of the Punjab. However, it was the opening of the Jhelum Valley Cart Road connecting Kashmir to the Punjab, to wheeled traffic in 1890, which led to an almost instantaneous increase in trade with British India. Silk, having replaced the shawls in the export-economy of Kashmir, became a commodity of increasing value at the turn of the century. In 1890, the State took over the direct control of the industry to establish it on a commercial footing and by 1900 it had become clear that Kashmir could produce silk on a large scale. The nature and volume of trade from Jammu and Kashmir had undergone a major transformation, leading to a period of urban growth. Trade, coupled with the construction of the cart road and the Gilgit road, and a steady increase in tourism to Kashmir, led to an influx of money into the State.

However, these developments did not usher in a period of peace, and conflicts within and between communities escalated in this period. Despite the rhetoric of prosperity, not everyone was prosperous. The landed elite, as has already been pointed out, lost economic and political influence in the wake of the land settlement. Moreover, revenue officials, mostly Pandits, not only lost their traditional occupations to outsiders with the establishment of the State Council and the influx of Punjabis in the State, they were also unable to profit from their positions as a result of the regulation of the revenue system.

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98 Zutshi, Languages of Belonging, pp. 101-3.
99 Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 303.
Educational Reforms

The system of education in Jammu and Kashmir prior to the late nineteenth century was informal and indigenous. Under this system, Pandits and Moulvis imparted education to local Hindu and Muslim boys in pathshalas and madrasas, respectively. The early Dogra rulers, placed at the head of the newly established state of Jammu and Kashmir, did not interest themselves in the educational affairs of the people. Gulab Singh, the first Dogra Maharaja, was too busy in consolidating his dominions to pay much attention to the educational status of his subjects. Although, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, his successor, was first to take an active interest in education and made some feeble attempts at founding a few state-supported institutions, the system of education continued to be unregulated and religious. There was no concerted effort on the part of the government to promote education among the mass of population. In fact, the government was opposed to the schools established by the Christian Missionary Society in Srinagar in 1880. It is obvious that in this period the State did not consider education either its responsibility or a priority.

It was after the establishment of the British ascendancy in Kashmir that some reform measures were initiated in the field of education. The state government could no longer follow a policy of non-intervention in matters of education as the reigns of the administration were now in the hands of the British. There were a few attempts made by the State Council—which was constituted after the deposition of Maharaja—to improve
the educational system of Jammu and Kashmir. The administration report of 1890-91 noted the lack of proper school buildings and methods of teaching in the schools and the need for opening more primary schools. A few primary schools were established by the Council, with the number rising from 8 to 31 during 1891-92.\textsuperscript{103} There was a corresponding increase in the number of students in town and village schools from 836 in 1889-90 to 4214 in 1892-93.\textsuperscript{104} The Council also took steps to encourage private enterprise to promote education. Bhag Ram, the Home and Judicial member-in-charge of the state education department, went to the extent of appealing to the private purses of the Maharaja, the Resident, the members of the Council by asking them to “to prove very liberal...for subscribing to education”.\textsuperscript{105}

Although some steps were taken following the British intervention to improve the educational standards of the people in Jammu and Kashmir, the State Council, in the initial years of its rule, did not make any serious attempt to reform the educational sector of Jammu and Kashmir. The reason for this inaction was that the State did not feel the necessity to educate the local masses. The purpose for the introduction of modern education among the native subjects in British India was to create a class that could help with the task of administering the vast country. Contrarily, this urgency was not felt in Jammu and Kashmir as the State simply imported these individuals, particularly from Punjab, to run its growing bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{106} Even the State Council was composed almost

\textsuperscript{103} Administrative report of Jammu and Kashmir State, 1890-91, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{104} Administrative report of Jammu and Kashmir State, 1892-93, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 72.
\textsuperscript{106} Commenting on the importation of the Kashmir bureaucracy, P. N. Bazaz made a scathing remark: “Armies of outsiders trailed behind the officers from the plains with no more interest than to draw as much as they could, and then to depart leaving behind their kindred as successors to continue the drain; and thus
entirely of Indians imported from British India; and it followed a policy of recruiting Dogras and other Punjabis to run all branches of the administration. The replacement of Persian with Urdu as the language of administration in 1889 further justified the importation of Punjabis into the state administration.\(^{107}\) As late as 1909, the Resident in Kashmir, Sir Francis Younghusband was to admit that there was a distinct tendency among these Punjabi officials of the state to “secure Kashmir not for the Kashmiris...but for the Punjabis and the other Indians”.\(^{108}\)

However, by the early twentieth century, the State Council under the auspices of the British Residency began to present itself as the promoter of education among the local population of the State. The schools in the state were reorganized along the lines of the Punjab University syllabus and affiliated to the University. An Arts college was established at Jammu in 1905 to commemorate the royal visit of the Prince of Wales. The government set up a Normal School in Srinagar in 1906, and opened girl’s schools in several parts of the state. The government also instituted a number of college scholarships for the students of the State studying in Punjab. Dr. Annie Besant started a Hindu College in Srinagar in 1905, which was taken over by the government in 1911 and renamed Sri Pratap College. By the second decade of the twentieth century education had become one

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\(^{107}\) One of the first steps taken by the State Council after its institution in 1889 was to replace Persian with Urdu as the language of administration, the language being imported alongside numerous administrative servants from neighboring British Punjab. *Administration Report of Jammu and Kashmir State, 1893-94*, p. 46.

of the most expressive indicators of the greater economic and political integration of Jammu and Kashmir with British India.\textsuperscript{109}

By the first decade of the twentieth century, however, it became clear that the State failed to impart education to the vast majority of its subjects because it considered education to be the preserve of the upper class. The Dogra State seemed to have imported the colonial educational system along with its ideological content.\textsuperscript{110} The state did not focus much on the education of the common masses who happened to be the Muslims, while the administrative class which largely consisted of the Punjabi Hindu and Kashmiri Pandits, reaped the maximum fruits of the educational policies launched by the Dogra state under the guidance of the British Indian government.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., pp. 178-9.

\textsuperscript{110} The Dogra State's policies in the field of education in the late nineteenth century can only be understood in terms of the British colonial project of education. Education had become central to the project of colonialism in British India by the early nineteenth century. If the empire that had already been won by the urban bourgeoisie had to be preserved for profit, then the dominant groups in Indian society had to be included in the colonial enterprise. This involved a creation of a civil society among the natives and their incultation into the ethos, rules and symbols of the new order, which could only be achieved through education. Education thus had a significant role to play in the transformation of a commercial institution into a colonial state. The changes in the educational system introduced in the early nineteenth century were part of this process. For instance, Persian was abolished in official correspondence in 1835 and the government's weight was thrown behind English-medium education. At the same time, the idea of different types of education for different classes came to define the British educational system in India. Krishna Kumar, \textit{Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas}. (New Delhi: 1991), pp. 24-6, quoted in Chitralekha Zutshi, \textit{British Intervention in a Princely State: The Case of Jammu and Kashmir in the Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries}, Paper presented at the 18\textsuperscript{th} European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, 2004, p. 12. As propounded by J.S. Mill and Macaulay, the elite would gain western education through the English language and the rest of the population would be consigned to, if anything, studying their own languages, while receiving western ideas from the elite through "downward filtration." See; Gauri Viswanathan, \textit{Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India}, (New York: 1989), p. 149.

\textsuperscript{111} Private institutions were growing at a much faster rate than the public educational institutions in this period. For instance, while the number of public institutions for males and females from 1901-04 increased by 24, the number of private institutions increased by 75 in the same period. This also shows the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the government for the mass education. See Zutshi, \textit{British Intervention in a Princely State}, p. 16.
The State's focus on class in defining the role of education in Kashmiri society meant that the majority of the Kashmiri population remained out of the state-backed education system. The Kashmiri Muslim leadership recognized that the Muslim community, a majority in the state and yet forming an extremely small proportion of the educated, stood much to lose by being excluded from this state-sponsored education system. The leadership recognized that the Dogra state was not interested in promoting education among the Kashmiris because it did not desire to appoint them to government positions. The traditional system of education was no longer enough if Muslims were to be integrated into the state education department. The task of reforming society entailed in awakening people to the benefits of modern education. The first leader who took upon himself to reform the Kashmiri Muslim community through his activities on the educational front was Mirwaiz Rasool Shah, head preacher at the Jama Masjid in Srinagar. He founded the Anjuman Nusrat-ul-Islam, literally meaning the Society for the Victory of Islam. A school was soon attached to the Society. Similar moves were made by the heads of various shrines to establish schools within a few years of the Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam. Initially the aim of these schools was to provide their students traditional Islamic education. The political and economic needs of the time, however, dictated that these institutions alter their nature and project. As a result, the Anjuman and

\[\text{In the year 1891-92, out of a total population of 757, 433 Muslims, only 233 were being educated in the State run schools, while out of a population 52, 576 Hindus, 1,327 were receiving state instruction. The figures show that the though the Hindus formed less than 7 per cent of the population, they monopolized the over 83 per cent of the education bestowed by the state. See Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, pp. 228-29. The figures given by Lawrence did not improve much in the coming years. By the census of 1921, there were only 19 educated Muslim males as compared to 508 Hindu males per thousand of population in Kashmir province. Mohammad, Census of India, 1921, p. 121.}\]
other such type of schools reorganized their course of study that included a firm grounding in Islamic theology along with a study of secular subjects.\textsuperscript{113}

Although, the leadership of the Muslim educational reform movement in Kashmir was composed entirely of the religious elite, the discourse of this movement attempted to provide for the regeneration of the Muslim community alongside its advancement in western education. There are recurrent references to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s model of educational advancement of the Indian Muslims. The frequent references to Sir Sayyid in the discourse of this movement are significant as unlike in British India, where the Deobandi and Farangi Mahali ulema were launching bitter critiques of Sir Sayyid, the Kashmiri religious elite had appropriated his methods as a model for the educational and ultimately the economic advancement of the Kashmiri Muslim community.\textsuperscript{114}

The advent of the British on the political scene of Jammu and Kashmir and the simultaneous state regulation of the education system had given the Kashmiri Muslim leadership the opportunity to press its social and political demands on the state. Since the Dogra state was modeling its education system on British lines, it also followed that those who went through the system would be advantageously placed for state employment.

Thus, the informal system of indigenous education that had prevailed in Jammu and Kashmir before the ascendancy of the British on the political scene of the State was systematically converted into a state-sponsored system, far more centralized and homogenous in nature. But the State’s educational policies were not intended to give education to the common masses. With the result, majority of the population which

\textsuperscript{113} Zutshi, \textit{British Intervention in a Princely State}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{114} Zutshi, \textit{Languages of Belonging}, pp. 186-7.
consisted of the Muslims continued to be submerged in the depths of illiteracy. In the coming decades, the backwardness of Muslims in the field of education, and the insistence on state recognition of Muslims as a separate category in the field, became central components of the Kashmiri Muslim leadership's appeals to the Residency, and after the return of powers to Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1924, directly to the colonial state.

Conclusion

The defeat of the Sikhs in the Second Anglo-Sikh War finally sealed any prospect of the Punjab being an independent empire and the boundaries of the British Indian Empire were now directly touching the territories of Jammu and Kashmir. This changing geo-political scenario made the British authorities to pursue their policies which would suit the best interests of their Indian Empire. Consequently, the focus of the British policy now shifted directly towards Jammu and Kashmir. The mal-administration of the Kashmir Darbar, the British failure in the Afghan war of 1878, the ruthless criticism of the Anglo-Indian and British press of the Governments' policies, particularly of the Kashmir Government in the famine of 1877, and the political nature of the activities of the Officer on Special Duty provided a pretext to the British Indian authorities to provide for "efficient" political ascendancy and supervision in Jammu and Kashmir which manifested itself in the establishment of the British Residency in Kashmir in 1885 and stripping the Maharaja of all his powers in 1889. The British ascendancy exposed the state structures to the British influences. The land revenue settlements created a settled class of peasantry which played a prominent role in the movements that were launched in Kashmir at a later stage. With the British intervention in Kashmir, the trading activities with British India received a boost which in turn brought the Kashmiri elite closer to their
counterparts in colonial India and provided much needed financial, moral and physical support for their endeavors on socio-political fronts. The half-hearted attempts by the State Council to reform the educational sector in turn helped create an environment for the Kashmiri leadership to launch the educational reform movements. It was after consolidating their position through these educational reform movements that the Kashmiri leadership, with the aid and advice of different political and social organizations of British India, particularly the Punjab, began pressuring the state to play a more active role to address the socio-economic and political issues of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Thus, the appointment of the Resident and removing Maharaja Pratap Singh from the throne provided the British Indian Government with a firmer control over the administration of Jammu and Kashmir. Of course, the measure was dictated much by the imperial considerations as by the internal maladministration in the state. In what way did the establishment of the Residency and the deposition of the Maharaja clear the way for the imperial British Indian government to implement their comprehensive defence scheme without any opposition from the Kashmir Darbar shall be discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter Five

Jammu and Kashmir as a Frontline State

Henry Hardinge, the Governor-General, resolved to exploit the creation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir as the chosen instrument of the Government of India for the protection of what came to be known as the north-western frontier of the British Indian Empire. Although, there was much that the Government of India had yet to learn about the north-western frontier, it was somewhat aware of the major features of geo-political and commercial importance of the region because of the individual travels of William Moorcroft during the early 1820s. However, the official British exploration of the frontier territories of the Kashmir began immediately after its sale to Gulab Singh when the Boundary Commissions were dispatched to work out the eastern boundaries of the newly founded state. One of its Commissions fixed the border between Ladakh and British-occupied Lahoul and Spiti to the south. Two other commissions, however, failed to demarcate the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet due to the non-cooperation from Tibet and China. However, Vans Agnew, a member of one of the commissions, optimistically observed that “the line was... already sufficiently defined by nature, and recognized by custom, with the exception of its two extremities”. But those on the other side apparently did not accept the claim. Thus, the eastern boundary of Kashmir

1 Technically an unofficial traveler, ostensibly concerned with the supply of horses for the East India Company, Moorcroft travelled extensively in the north-western border of Indian empire, between 1812 and 1825, investigating its trade, natural resources and most importantly politics. See, William Moorcroft & George Trebeck, Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab from 1819 to 1825, 2 vols. (London: 1841, repr., New Delhi: 1971.)

2 This long simmering dispute between the government of India and the China finally culminated in the Chinese invasion of Ladakh in 1962. Jammu and Kashmir’s eastern limits thus have remained undecided to this day.
remained undefined. However, the general result of the Boundary Commissions was that they explored the frontier regions of Jammu and Kashmir, though there remained a great deal to discover about their geo-political potential in the context of the British Indian Empire.  

The new state’s frontiers to the north and north-west also remained undefined because the Treaty of Amritsar was extremely vague about the exact boundary of the state to its north. There was a reference in Article 1 to the river Indus, to the “eastward” of which lay the state of Jammu and Kashmir. But what was the situation to the northward of that river, in that the Indus for much of its course through the state ran in a generally east-west direction? Here, between the Indus and the unexplored mountain crests beyond which lay Eastern Turkistan, there were a number of small states, Chitral, Hunza, Nagar, Gilgit, Punial, Dir, Swat, Ishkoman and Yasin, and Chilas. The whole region was called Dardistan. The key to this whole region was Gilgit. Situated on a river flowing into the Indus from the north, Gilgit controlled access to Hunza and the passes leading into Eastern Turkistan. From Gilgit it was also possible to travel to Chitral and

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2 The task of defining the boundary was further made difficult by two other factors; one was the almost impenetrable mountain terrain of this area, and the other by the fiercely independent spirit of its inhabitants. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, vol. vi, pp. 165-6.
3 Dardistan is a group of mountain polities extending from north-western edge of the valley of Kashmir up to the Karakoram crest. Dr. G.W. Leitner, the first European visitor to Gilgit in 1866 who produced a written description of the region, is largely responsible for the use of the term Dardistan. His linguistic studies convinced him that the inhabitants of this part of the world spoke languages which belonged to a distinct group. He further wrote that the people were neither Indian, nor Tibetan, nor of the Turkish stock of Central Asia. They appeared totally a distinct group. He called them Darads after the Daradas of Sanskrit literature and the Daradae of classical geographers. Needless to say, the term Dard has no meaning among the local inhabitants of “Dardistan”, John Keay, *The Gilgit Game, The Explorers of Western Himalayas 1865-95*, (Oxford: 1993), pp. 15-6.
that remote and mysterious corner of what was then called Kafiristan. Any outside control on the Gilgit region was extremely difficult because the people of the region were known for their fiercely independent spirit. By 1842, however, the Sikhs had imposed their authority on this region and Nathu Shah, an official appointed by Lahore, ruled as governor. When Gulab Singh became the Maharaja, Nathu Shah transferred his loyalty to him, and the area officially passed under Dogra hegemony. But the people of that region, who had only reluctantly accepted Sikh domination, did not remain reconciled to their new rulers. As early as 1847, an anti-Dogra uprising occurred during which Nathu Shah was murdered. The rebels were subdued, but additional insurrection in 1852 marked the end of Dogra rule. In this revolt almost a thousand Dogras lost their lives. Thus, Gilgit had to be given up and the Indus became the boundary of the state, with Bunji as its most northerly outpost. Gilgit was finally recaptured by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1860 and annexed to the state of Jammu and Kashmir as the capital of the Gilgit Wazarat.

Hunza (and Nagar, its traditional rival to its immediate east) had long been in contact with Gilgit. Maharaja Ranbir Singh tried to extend his influence northward into this mountain state which dominated the frontier passes. By 1870 some treaty relationship had been established between the ruler of Hunza and the Dogras which was interpreted by Ranbir Singh to mean that Hunza had accepted Dogra suzerainty. But at

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7 Kafiristan covered the present day Nuristan province and its surroundings in north-eastern Afghanistan.
the same time, the ruler of Hunza accepted the suzerainty of China. The Chinese regarded Hunza as a border district of Sinkiang.10

The Dogra designs in Dardistan were viewed with considerable hostility by the ruler of Chitral, the Mehtar, who in 1860s reigned over what was to all intents and purposes an independent kingdom. Chitral competed with the Dogras for influence over other Dardistan polities, notably Yasin; and it posed a constant challenge to the Dogra position in Gilgit. Chitral had long been involved in the world of Afghan politics. Geopolitically, in 1860s it was in fact a buffer of sorts between the territories of Jammu and Kashmir and the sphere of authority of the rulers of Kabul. In 1878 Chitral was to acknowledge Dogra suzerainty, confirmed formally under British supervision in 1914.11

Propelled by the commercial and strategic needs, Russia, by 1860s, started moving towards the southern and eastern regions beyond its empire.12 Chinkent, Tashkent, Kohj and Samarkand were occupied in 1865, 1866 and 1868 respectively. By 1870 Bokhara and Samarkand were also brought under the Russian influence.13 With these conquests the Russian influences had touched Afghanistan, and was getting alarmingly close to the northern frontier of the British Indian Empire.14 The Russians also appeared to be fast approaching Chinese Turkistan15 at the moment when it looked as if

11 The suzerainty was confirmed by the Mastuj Agreement of 1914, by which the Mehtar, Shuja-ul-Mulk, agreed to recognize the Kashmiri suzerainty and to pay the Maharaja an annual tribute of three horses, five hawks, ad five hounds. This was a confirmation of the Chitral agreement with Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1878. F. M. Hassanain, Gilgit The Northern Gate of India, (Delhi: 1978), pp. 7-8, 44, & 62-3.
15 The Chinese Turkistan not only included Kashgar and Yarkand but its territories extended to the borders of China proper and also included the city of Urumchi (Tihua) and the Mongolian borderlands along the
Chinese rule over its Muslim subjects in Central Asia would collapse to leave what British perceived as an extremely dangerous power vacuum. So it became clear to the British policy makers that the security of the north-western frontier of India either was being, or shortly would be, threatened.16

The rapid Russian advances made the government of India to give a serious thought to the question of defence of the northern frontier. With the result, by 1870s the strategic importance of Dardistan began to be studied by the British with some intensity. It was considered the barrier which protected colonial British India from attack or subversion from northern Afghanistan and Chinese Turkistan, both of which were perceived by the government of India as potential targets.17 In these years, as the crisis leading to the second Afghan war developed and the suspicions of the Russian intentions increased, the government of India concluded that, as a substitute for the direct British control, their best interests lay in supporting the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir in stabilizing his influence in these northern tracts of Dardistan.18

With this end in view, Lord Lytton, the Viceroy decided to allow the Maharaja to take possession of Chitral and Yasin, in return of a British Agent to be stationed at Gilgit.19 The arrangement would secure to the Indian government an effective control over the Ishkoman and Baroghil passes and thus serve as a check upon Russian or even Afghan encroachment upon the northern frontier of India. With a firm control over

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16 Adler, British India’s Northern Frontier 1865-1895, p. 24.
17 Foreign, Sec., 34-60B K.W., Progs, July 1877, NAI.
18 Gadru, Kashmir Papers, pp. 21-2.
19 Foreign, Sec., 34-60B K.W., Progs, July 1877, NAI.
Chitral and Yasin, the British Indian government hoped to secure the north-western frontier of India against any invading army. The arrangement was discussed by the Viceroy with Ranbir Singh at Madhopur—a town in British India— on 17 and 18 November 1876. The Maharaja was but too willing to extend his political influence over Chitral and Yasin, if necessary with British aid, but he had qualms over the appointment of a British Agent at Gilgit. He had the bitter experience of the political officer at Leh a decade earlier. The officer had acted as an open sesame to the entire frontier of Kashmir to the British surveillance. But Lytton made it a sine qua non of the proposed arrangement, and at one stage it seemed as if the negotiation would fall through. The matter, however, was settled when Lytton gave assurances to Ranbir Singh that the Gilgit Agent would not interfere in his domestic affairs, but would only be concerned with obtaining information as to the progress of events beyond the Kashmir frontier. Thus, the Madhopur settlement resulted in the establishment of the Gilgit Agency and Captain Biddulph became the first Political Agent at Gilgit in 1877.

John Biddulph was sent with the clear instructions to involve himself actively in tribal affairs and obtain reliable information in regard to occurrences beyond the border. However, things did not go well. Relations between the Gilgit Agent and the Maharaja of

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20 Ibid.
21 Foreign, Sec., No. 38, Progs., July 1877, NAI.
22 In 1867, the British government decided to appoint an Officer on Special Duty in Ladakh in order to "get the information beyond the Ladakh frontiers" and will not interfere in internal administration. The Maharaja appealed that such posting amounted to interference in his internal administration. But the government of India was not ready to make any changes to the proposal. In the beginning, the arrangement was made only for one year but later on it was decided to send a British officer every year to Ladakh. File No. 375 of 1867. Jammu and Kashmir Archives, Srinagar.
23 Viceroy to Maharaja, 22 Dec. 1876, Foreign, Sec., no. 40, Progs, July, 1877; Foreign, Sec., No. 39, Progs., July, 1877, NAI.
Kashmir were not always cordial. The intelligence derived from this outpost was considered to be disappointing. Hunza was not brought within the British sphere. In fact, it was agreed on all hands that the experiment of placing a British officer in that out-of-the-way place merely to observe and report, without direct powers of dealing with the frontier chiefs, had not been advantageous to British policy. Tribal intrigues and their mutual jealousies had made it clear that unless the Gilgit position was sufficiently strengthened nothing could be done from that isolated post to establish British influence along the Kashmir frontiers. Timely supply of men and material to Gilgit in any emergency was very difficult because of the weak and inadequate means of communications between Srinagar and Gilgit. The Gilgit army, the mainstay of the Agency was “ill-paid, ill-fed and ill-disciplined” and thus “unfit for an active service in a mountainous country”. To Lord Ripon, Lytton’s successor in India, the appointment of Bidulph at Gilgit was a “part of the forward policy” that contained the danger of involvement in the paltry intrigues of the small states beyond the Kashmir border; at the same time it was likely to excite the suspicions of the Maharaja as well as of the Afghan Amir. The Russian threat, which the Agency was designed to meet, appeared for the moment to be less than what had once been thought. Further, Ripon’s doubts about the usefulness of the Agency were confirmed by the attack of the ruler of Yasin on Gilgit in

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24 Adler, *British India’s Northern Frontier*, p. 130.
26 Adler, *British India’s Northern Frontier*, p. 132.
27 Foreign., Sec. Nos. 393, (K.W.), Progs., July, 1881, NAI.
28 Foreign, Sec. F, January 1888, Nos. 115-118, NAI.
29 Biddulph’s Report on Kashmir Army, Foreign, Sec. E, No. 346, July 1883, NAI.
31 Government of India to Viscount Granbrook, No. 160, July 7, 1879, GOI, Foreign, Sec., July 1879, No. 185, NAI.
October 1880. Thus, Ripon finally decided to withdraw the Gilgit Agent from this distant post in 1881.\(^{32}\)

However, the withdrawal was by no means considered final.\(^{33}\) Giving the Maharaja a broad hint of the future policy of the government, Ripon impressed upon the Maharaja that the government of India reserved full discretion to send back an officer to Gilgit if that should be considered necessary. The Maharaja was further informed that his relations with the states on his northern frontier could not but be a matter of permanent concern to the British Indian government. He would therefore be expected to supply early and accurate information on the course of events in that region.\(^{34}\) Ripon availed himself of the withdrawal of the Gilgit Agent to raise and strengthen the status of the Officer on Special Duty in Kashmir, and the Maharaja was asked to consult him on all matters effecting the relations of his state with any one of the adjoining chiefships.\(^{35}\)

There was a difference of opinion between the government of India and the home authorities at London. Although the proposal of Ripon was accepted, they had expressed reservations regarding the withdrawal of the Gilgit Agency. Fearing that the Amir of Afghanistan might bring the states on the frontiers of Jammu and Kashmir under his control, Burne, the Secretary of the Political Department, remarked that the withdrawal of the Gilgit Agent meant the removal of “a sentry from a vulnerable point of the Indian

\(^{32}\) For. Sec., Progs. July, 1881, No. 396, NAI.
\(^{33}\) For. Sec., No. 314-399(K.W. Note of 19th May, 1881), Progs. July, 1881, NAI.
\(^{34}\) Government of India to Secretary of State, No. 130, July 15, 1881, GOI, Foreign, Sec. E, August 1884, Nos. 4-19, NAI; Henry to Foreign Secretary, 18th June, 1881, Foreign, Sec., No. 388, Progs., July, 1881. NAI.
\(^{35}\) Viceroy to Maharaja, 18th June, 1881, Foreign, Sec., No. 388, Progs., July, 1881. NAI.
frontier." Hartington, the Secretary of State for India, wrote in his despatch—which sanctioned the withdrawal proposal—that, "it cannot be overlooked that the effect of the withdrawal of the Agent may possibly be practically to close a valuable channel of information as to the course of events in the countries between Kashmir and Russian Turkistan, at a moment when such information is likely to be of particular interest."

Hartington seconded the opinion of Lord Ripon regarding the right of the British government to re-establish the Gilgit Agency in future. He further recorded, for the Viceroy's consideration that the withdrawal of the Gilgit Agency was merely a temporary expedient, and its continuance would only depend upon the Maharaja's capacity to preserve the influence of the Indian government in the regions beyond his northern frontiers.

However, the situation at the frontiers soon began to change which led the government of India to reconsider its policy towards Jammu and Kashmir. The 1880s saw Anglo-Russian competition in Asia rapidly coming to a climax. The Russians were approaching, with alarming velocity, the northern borders of Afghanistan both from what is today Turkmenistan and from the Pamirs. The Russian advance upon Panjden, a territory of disputable ownership upon the northern frontiers of Afghanistan, in 1885, very nearly precipitated a war between England and Russia. Although, the war was

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36 Political Department, Secret E, (Confidnl.) progs., Nos. 331-37, NAI.
37 Ibid.
38 Secretary of State to Government of India, No. 36 (Sec), September 16, 1881, GOI, Foreign Sec., January 1882, Nos. 741-776, NAI.
avoided as the issue was submitted to arbitration, the circumstances led to a serious reconsideration of the question of imperial defence.\textsuperscript{39}

There were also reports of Russian intrigues along the Kashmir frontiers.\textsuperscript{40} Rumour spread around that Russia was contemplating an advance by the Baroghil pass to occupy Yasin, and that the rulers of Chitral and Yarkand had concluded an alliance with Russia.\textsuperscript{41} In 1888, a Russian surveyor Captain Gromchevsky was reported to have visited Hunza to explore the possibilities of the Russian penetration across the Hindukush. There was a certain gap between the eastern boundary of Afghanistan at Wakhan and the western-most tip of the Chinese Empire at Aktash through which small Russian forces could easily penetrate further south, and disturb the peace of the Hindukush regions. In fact, this tract was considered by Russia as a sort of "no-man's land" so that Gromchevsky's visit to Hunza and his movements along the Pamirs drove the point home that an adequate defensive measure for the protection of the northern frontier was a necessity that admitted of no indefinite postponement.\textsuperscript{42}

Reports were also received from Peshawar and other frontier districts that Russia had sent two spies to India—one to Bombay and Calcutta—for the purpose of collecting


\textsuperscript{40} The Russian spies were said to have even visited the territories of Jammu and Kashmir and taken notes of the different routes to the state.

\textsuperscript{41} Peshawar Confidential Diary No 17 of September 14, 1887, Government of India, Foreign. Sec. F, January 1888, Nos. 246-269, NAI.

information and fomenting trouble against the British government. The trans-Caspian railway was also making rapid progress, and it was feared that on its completion Russian forces would be gathered in Central Asia "with a view to threatening India."

Although, these reports were highly exaggerated and the government of India did not show any aggressive reaction, the Viceroy appointed a Defence Committee to suggest the measures for "a complete and thorough plan" for the northern frontier. He also sent Colonel Lockhart on an expedition via Gilgit and Chitral to explore the passes of the Hindukush.

Stressing the strategic importance of Gilgit, the Defence Committee recommended, as a measure of precaution against any attack upon Kashmir, the construction of a road between Srinagar and Gilgit.

Lockhart reported that although there was no serious threat to the security of the northern frontiers and that a large army might not be able to reach India by the Gilgit-Chitral route, the appearance of small bodies of Russian troops in the midst of the frontier chiefships under the Hindukush would produce a disquieting effect throughout India. It was to counter this threat that he suggested the re-establishment of a British Agent at Gilgit. He hoped that with a British Agent in that quarter of Jammu and Kashmir, there

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43 Memorandum of Information regarding the North-West Frontier, October, 1886, pp. 985-93, cited in Ghose, Kashmir in Transition, pp. 164-5.
45 The Defence Committee among others included the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Donald Stewart followed by Fredric Roberts, Sir George Chesney—the Military Member of the Viceroy's Council. F. S. Roberts, Forty—one Years in India, (London: 1898), vol. ii, p. 424.
would be no danger. In short, Lockhart stressed the importance of Gilgit as the defensive nucleus of Dardistan. He was also in favour of a substantial control over the ruler of Chitral.48

Although Dufferin believed that Russia could hardly afford a war with England in Central Asia—and mainly in view of her pre-occupations in Europe—he could not but agree with Cross, the Secretary of State for India that the policy of his government must be “steady and unceasing preparation to put [themselves] in a complete state of defence.” He wrote to Cross that “under any circumstances, [they] must not shut [their] eyes to the fact that in the north-west [they were] facing an excitable and credulous population and that if the Russians were to come..., the rumour of such a circumstance would undoubtedly have an inconvenient effect.”49

In any case, “the establishment of such a power as Russia in strength and security” in close proximity of the Indian Empire could not but produce “very momentous, if not disastrous, consequences, especially when so uncertain and unknown a quantity as Afghanistan and adjacent border tribes form an essential element of the problem.”50 Thus it became clear that Lord Dufferin was fast becoming a convert to the Forward Policy; he certainly began to feel the need for a more active policy on the Kashmir frontier when Russian activities spread beyond the Hindukush and seemed to threaten the security of the Indian Empire.

48 Lockhart also reported that the Baroghil Pass which had hitherto been considered to be “the easiest avenue to Gilgit” did not really lead to that place. The easiest route to Chitral from the side of Badakhshan was the Dora Pass which was about 14,800 feet high. For Chitral, Lockhart recommended the appointment of a native agent to ensure the continued loyalty of its ruler. Lockhart and Woodthorpe, Gilgit Mission. (London: 1889), p. 109, 275-80 & p. 348; Durand, The Making of a Frontier, p. 119.
50 Dufferin to Cross, 3 June 1887, Ibid.
Expressing his opinion regarding the frontier defence scheme, Mortimer Durand, the Foreign Secretary believed that if the government of India were in serious difficulties with Russia, Jammu and Kashmir would be “more or less shaky and inclined to hedge.” He recommended the re-establishment of the Gilgit Agency under one or more English officers, assisted by a good corps of Dogras raised from Kashmir. From Gilgit, efforts should be made to cultivate the friendship of the tribes on the Kashmir frontier, and a direct road to Chitral via Dir ought to be opened to facilitate communication between British territories and the Kashmir frontier.51

Apart from the Russian advance in Central Asia, there were reports of the Afghan intrigues in the frontier regions of Kashmir that urged upon the consideration of the government of India the question of defence of the northern frontier. Abdul Rehman, the Afghan Amir was claiming suzerainty over the territories to the north-west of Kashmir.52 Although, the Amir disavowed all his aggressive intentions on Chitral in 1881, some months later he reassured his claims to suzerainty over its ruler.53 He even tried to establish his influence over the neighbouring chiefships of Bajaur, Swat and Dir. There were rumours that Amir also wanted to extend his influence up to Gilgit.54

51 Memo on the present position in Central Asia by H.M. Durand, Government of India, Foreign, Sec-F. October 1887, Nos. 286-291, NAI.
52 The Amir of Afghanistan had always held the opinion that Chitral, Dir, Swat, Bajaur, Jindal and other tribal territories to the north of Peshawar, and on the north-western frontier of Kashmir, were dependencies of Kabul, and thus he made persistent endeavors to assume sovereignty over these territories. The government of India, however, never recognized any claim on the part of the Afghan ruler to allegiance from these states.
54 Lt. Col. Sardar Mohammad Azfal Khan to the Secretary government of India, Foreign Dept., No. 61. August 10, 1883, NAI; Alder, British India's Northern Frontier, p. 149.
Ripon, the Viceroy warned the Amir that the British government was bound by treaty obligations to recognize Kashmir’s suzerainty over Chitral, and therefore his violation of Chitral territories would be considered by them an unfriendly act. The Amir was also warned that Bajaur, Swat and Dir were regarded by the government of India “as being beyond the proper limits of Afghan influence.” But this did not seem to have produced any effect upon the Amir and the Afghan threat continued to grow; the rulers of Chitral, Dir and Jandol were so unnerved by the Amir’s proclaimed intentions that they made friendly overtures to the British government for protection against him. The ruler of Chitral was even anxious to receive a British Resident at his court. Finally, when the Afghan ruler moved to Jalalabad early in 1888, and was reported to mediating an attack on Bajaur, even the Punjab government could not ignore it; they urged the government of India to take the matter up with the Amir.

Taking a stand on the issue, the Secretary of State for India pressured the British Indian government to consider the desirability of establishing “closer relations with the tribes on the frontier from Chitral to Baluchistan with a view to bringing them under control and utilizing them for defence in the event of any hostile attack from that side.” Lord Dufferin who was certainly aware of the importance of the tribal problem, agreed with the Secretary of State. Although he still did not commit himself to establish close relations with these frontier chiefs, he was well aware of the fact that the reconsideration of the policy towards the tribal regions of Jammu and Kashmir could not be long

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56 Foreign Dept., Secret-E, May 1884, Nos. 296-343, NAI.
57 Madhavi Yasin, British Paramountcy in Kashmir, p. 89.
58 Ibid., p. 89.
59 Secretary of State to the government of India, 21 July 1887, quoted in Ghose, Kashmir in Transition, p. 167.
postponed and the relations with these independent tribes ought to be put on more satisfactory footing. 60

At the time of the withdrawal of the Gilgit Agency, Maharaja Pratap Singh was asked by the British government to maintain his influence over the states on the Kashmir frontier but the recent disturbances at Hunza and Nagar, which shall be discussed at a later stage in this chapter, demonstrated to the British government that the Maharaja had “failed” in his “duty”. The Maharaja was also expected to “maintain constant watch over events on the frontier”, and to convey “the fullest and earliest information regarding all such matters” to the government of India through their Agent at Kashmir Darbar. But at Kashmir, complained of the Maharaja’s lack of frankness to keep him informed of the course of events beyond the northern frontier. He reported that the Maharaja often concealed information on frontier matters and acted in a manner the British did not relish. 61

All these events collectively persuaded the British Indian government to redefine their policy towards Jammu and Kashmir. The first step taken in this direction was the appointment of a British officer, Captain Algernon Durand, to the Gilgit frontier to examine the situation at Gilgit and the other frontier tribes and to report about the future possible complications with Russia. He was asked to work out a scheme for rendering Gilgit secure without the aid of the British troops, and for dominating from Gilgit through

61 Government of India to Secretary of State, 25 Sept. 1882, (Confid.), Foreign, Sec-E, September 1882, Nos. 586-628, NAI.
Kashmir forces the country up to the Hindukush.\textsuperscript{62} The appointment of Durand was prelude to the re-establishment of the Gilgit Agency.

Durand submitted his report in December 1888.\textsuperscript{63} In his report, he complained that the military position at Gilgit was unsatisfactory. He especially made the mention of the gap between the Afghan and Chinese frontiers that was left unguarded through which Russia could penetrate down to Hunza at any time and make her influence felt along the Kashmir frontier. As a remedy he, like Lockhart, also strongly recommended a scheme of frontier defence based upon the re-establishment of the British Agency at Gilgit consisting of four officers and a brigade of Kashmir troops. He also proposed for subsidizing the rulers of small states at the Kashmir frontier in return for their allegiance to the Indian government. He also recommended the construction of a direct road to Chitral from the Peshawar frontier via Dir.\textsuperscript{64}

In the meantime, the British Indian government had got a firmer control over the administration of Jammu and Kashmir. As a part of the imperial defence scheme, the government had already appointed a permanent British Resident in Jammu and Kashmir. Of course the measure was, as already discussed in the previous chapter, dictated much by the imperial considerations as by the internal maladministration in the state. After the establishment of the Residency, the Kashmir government was asked to raise and equip a force of 2500 men for India’s defence. This was readily accepted by the Kashmir

\textsuperscript{62} H.M. Durand to Captain A.G.A. Durand, June 22, 1888, Foreign Dept. Secret-F, September 1888, Nos. 176-190, NAI.

\textsuperscript{63} Durand’s Report, December 5, 1888, encl. in Government of India to Secretary of State, May 6, 1889, NAI.

\textsuperscript{64} Foreign Dept., Progs., Frontier B, October 1889, Nos. 104-151, NAI; Durand’s Report, December 5, 1888, encl. in Government of India to Secretary of State, May 6, 1889, NAI.
government because the administration was now under the virtual control of the British Resident. Moving ahead with their plans, in April 1889 the government of India took the extreme step of removing Maharaja Pratap Singh from the throne. After his deposition the administration was brought under the overall control of the government of India. This further cleared the way and made it easy for the imperial government to implement their comprehensive defence scheme without any opposition from the Kashmir government.

The government of India thought it convenient to accept the Durand recommendations because Lansdowne—the Viceroy—opined that the new arrangement had many advantages. The British would be in control of frontier policy, yet many of the resultant cost could be charged to the Kashmir government which would also both provide a considerable proportion of the military force required and maintain the major access route from Srinagar through Bunji.\(^5\)

Thus soon after the deposition of Pratap Singh, the recommendations of Algernon Durand were given a practical shape when he himself was instructed to re-establish the Gilgit Agency, but this time on a much firmer footing.\(^6\) The Kashmir government was asked to bear a part of the cost of the Agency.\(^7\) It is apt to note here that the State

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\(^6\) Durand was asked to visit Hunza and Nagar in order to win their allegiance to the government of India. He was asked to offer them the subsidies of Rs. 2000 each per annum, contingent up on the cessation of their raiding of the neighbouring regions and the grant of free access to their countries by British officers. He was also ordered to visit Chitral and set on foot the new arrangement there. H. M. Durand to Resident in Kashmir, No. 1234, August 5, 1889 (Confld.), Foreign Dept., Secret F, October 1889. Nos. 104-132; Col., NAI; Durand, *The Making of a Frontier*, p. 119.

\(^7\) The British not only burdened the Kashmir treasury, they also did not hesitate in exacting man-power from the state in the form of forced labour. The Gilgit *begar*, as it was famously known, was perhaps the most dreaded form of forced labour exacted by the state. In this form of forced labour the people, in the absence of proper transport system, were used to carry loads of grain, ammunition and food articles to Gilgit, and that too without any, or nominal, remuneration. Reportedly, this practice, which was usually employed during winters, took a heavy toll of life. There is sufficient evidence to show that although the
Council—which was acting under the strict control and supervision of the British Resident— "readily" accepted the government of India's proposal. There was no such type of opposition from the Kashmir government as was seen when the Agency was established for the first time in 1877.68

The states within the Gilgit Agent's supervision were: Chitral and Yasin, Hunza and Nagar to the north; the petty state of Punyal, adjoining on the west; and the states of Gor, Chilas, Darel and Tangir, all on the Indus. To mark the permanent re-establishment of the Gilgit Agency, all the tribal chiefs were invited to Gilgit, wherein a darbar was held and the formal announcement was made by which the chiefs were informed that their subsidies would in future be regularly paid every year.69

The Indian opinion was deadly against the establishment of the Gilgit Agency. They were of the view that Jammu and Kashmir was put into an indirect control of the government of India through a Resident at Srinagar and an Agent at Gilgit, as the government was gripped with a fear psychosis of an invasion on India, and therefore it wanted to plug every passage which might lead an enemy to India and it was with this end in view that Kashmir was taken in indirect possession through a Resident. The government of India, it was alleged, was squandering its resources in fruitless fortifications. In spite of the heavy expenditure the "scientific frontier" was still

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untraceable. It shifted from one place to another. At first, the place of danger was Baluchistan, afterwards it centered on Gilgit. It did not matter with the Indian officials if a work of enormous cost was found useless and then abandoned forever.70

The British Indian government, however, justified their actions by saying that they had no desire to have sovereign authority over these frontier tribes, but they only wanted to watch the foreign relations of these tribes. For this they offered psychological justification. Lord Lansdowne thought that in political geography, nature abhors a vacuum. Therefore, if any space was left vacant on the Indian frontiers, it would certainly be filled by others. It would be utter foolishness on their part to be indifferent towards that “no man’s land”. Lord Lansdowne also thought that the Gilgit outpost ought to be made “a centre of British influence” on the northern frontier of Kashmir. He justified that in reality Gilgit was the watch tower to the defence of the Indian subcontinent.71

Soon after the establishment of the Gilgit Agency, the British focused to secure the north-western frontiers of their empire in India. They needed to work on two interconnected fronts simultaneously: (i) to prevent any sudden attack by the Russian forces descending by the Baroghil or the Hunza group of passes; (ii) to consolidate their position in the tribal kingdoms. To achieve this end, they needed to have an effective control on the entire tribal region to the south of the Hindukush. Captain Francis Younghusband, who had been sent on deputation to the northern frontiers of Kashmir in the summer of 1889, discovered that not only the known routes in the frontier region were vulnerable to any foreign attack, but there were certain other passes as well, which

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70 The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review and Oriental Colonial Record, July and October 1893; Amrit Bazar Patrika, January 30, 1890, cited in Yasin, British Paramountcy in Kashmir, p. 95.
could be used by the enemy forces to invade the territories of Hunza. Durand, the Gilgit Agent, also drew the attention of the government of India to the possibility of a Russian force penetrating southward through these outlets. Both Durand and Younghusband agreed that in order to prevent such an attack the British government should assume the practical sovereignty of the entire tribal region up to the Hindukush. Lansdowne fell in line with his subordinates that the tribes along the Kashmir frontiers should be assimilated “as rapidly as possible” and must never be allowed to “pass on to the wrong side of the account.” It was indeed a conviction with the Viceroy that the mountain barrier to the north of Kashmir should “be the limit of [their] political jurisdiction.”

In order to achieve this, the government of India ordered Durand, the Agent, to consolidate the British position in Gilgit. Following the orders, Durand, immediately after his arrival at Gilgit, set himself to the task of consolidating the British influence over these tribes. He took the measures to strengthen the forts at that place and improve the transport system between Gilgit and Srinagar to help the smooth supplies for the troops stationed at Gilgit. The Gilgit-Srinagar road was gradually pushed up, and the question of improving the local communications was exhaustively examined. In his opinion, the road was necessary not only to keep tribal states in check, but also for any offensive action against a Russian force advancing towards Gilgit. The detailed information was received about the neighbouring principalities, and constant relations were kept up among the tribal chiefs. The tribal politics, Russian expansion, Hunza and Nagar expeditions,

72 Government of India to Secretary of State, Foreign Dept., Secret F, 14 July 1890, Nos. 557-60, NAI.
and the Amir of Afghanistan’s covetous eyes on the tribal states involved the government of India in every direction.74

However, the news of the re-establishment of Gilgit Agency was not received with much enthusiasm by the tribal chiefs. The Gilgit Agency was looked upon as the first step towards the annexation of the entire tribal region. There was a feeling of “uneasiness amongst the neighbouring tribes.” There was the absence of peace amongst the states within the circle of the Gilgit Agency itself. As early as in January 1888, Hunza had expelled the Jammu and Kashmir garrison from two key posts on the road to the north of Gilgit. The rising chief of Jandol, Umra Khan, was constantly at war with his neighbouring chiefships. The ruler of Chitral was at loggerheads with Umra Khan and he even wished the British government to interfere with the Jandol chief to put a restraint upon his aggressive tendencies. The crisis was deepened by the interference of the Amir of Afghanistan in the politics of northern frontiers. The Amir tried to press his suzerainty over Bajaur and thus continue his intrigues against the chief. The British Agent at Gilgit took stock of the situation on the frontiers and accordingly started preparing himself to meet the challenges posed by the tribal politics.75

The Strengthening of the Agency

The most urgent task facing the Gilgit Agency under Durand was to deal with Hunza and Nagar. Of all the Dard states which lie on the Kashmir frontier, Hunza and Nagar were strategically very important. They were only second to Chitral in their influence on the question of the defence of the northern frontier and were much less

74 Ghose, Kashmir in Transition, p. 177.
subservient to the Kashmir Darbar than Chitral. They commanded the various passes of the Hindukush. Of these two states Hunza, though smaller in population than Nagar, was of greater importance on account of its geographical position. From it Chinese Turkistan could be reached without much difficulty; immediately to its north, across the Kilik Pass, lay the gap between Afghanistan and China, through which Russian forces could march to Hunza, and via Gilgit to Kashmir. Safdar Ali, the ruler of Hunza, who had murdered his father, Ghazan Khan, in 1886 and had succeeded him, was fully aware of the strategic importance of his state. Though on his accession to the throne he had rendered his allegiance to the Kashmir Maharaja, Safdar Ali acknowledged at the same time the suzerainty of the Chinese, as his father had done before him. Of course, the recognition of Chinese suzerainty by the chief of Hunza hardly ever exceeded a nominal tribute, but the Chinese regarded Hunza as a border district of Sinkiang and even talked of ultimately incorporating it within their province. However, the government of India was ready to tolerate the Hunza ruler’s allegiance to both Kashmir and China so long as it did not threaten their security at the frontiers. But demonstrating a totally defiant attitude, in January 1888, in a rare alliance with its neighbour Nagar, Hunza had rebelled against Dogra authority and expelled the Jammu and Kashmir garrisons from two key posts on the road north of Gilgit, Chalt and Chaprot, and held them for several months before withdrawing. Strategically, these forts were very important for the defence of Kashmir and had been occupied by the Maharaja’s troops since 1876. For a while Gilgit itself was

threatened. Also threatened in 1888, of course, following the Hunza raid on Shahidullah, was trade along the caravan route across the Karakoram pass.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 139-143, 231 & 238; E.F. Knight, \textit{Where Three Empires Meet}, (London: 1893), p. 382.}

These disturbances unnerved the British Indian government so much that it summoned Algernon Durand to Simla to discuss the matter. Durand put forward his action plan before the higher authorities. In the light of the recent disturbances and on the recommendations of Durand, the government of India, in order to preserve its influence along the northern frontiers of Kashmir, decided to bring the states of Hunza and Nagar under its complete control. Durand was asked to address the letters to the Rajas of Hunza and Nagar; clearly pointing out that for the safety of Kashmir and its dependencies the government should have free access to their territories whenever required. The Viceroy further ordered that the states should be plainly told that while the government of India had no intention to interfere in their internal affairs, it was determined to act as the paramount power, to reserve to themselves the right to build military roads through their territories as far as necessary to secure the command of the Hindukush passes, and to place the British officers in their territories, if deemed necessary. Durand was also commanded to inform the Rajas that if they should refuse to comply with these demands, troops from Gilgit would march into their countries, put down all opposition by force, and would construct the roads in spite of the opposition offered. Though these measures were certain to evoke protests from these two states, yet the government was still in favour of implementing them. At the same time the Gilgit Agency was strengthened by increasing the guard by 200 Gurkhas, more guns, a telegraph line from Srinagar to Gilgit, and fourteen more officers for the Agency staff. This was considered necessary to train
the Kashmir troops of the Agency so that they might be able to hold their own against any Russian advance.  

Initially Algernon Durand tried to control Hunza and Nagar by diplomacy; but he soon concluded that the rulers of both these states were far from being in a conciliatory mood. The negotiations between the Gilgit Agent and these rulers broke down and by late 1891 the British found themselves at war with both Hunza and Nagar. The British won the war of 1891-92 and Safdar Ali, the Hunza ruler, fled and took refuge at Chinese Sinkiang.

There was a great uneasiness in China with regard to the British expedition of Hunza because of their claim over this tribe. Anxious enquiries were made by the Chinese authorities from the government of India. They also informed the British government that they would like to send a Chinese envoy to Gilgit to discuss the future of Hunza. However, the British Indian government took a strong exception to the Chinese reaction and the Viceroy was not disposed to recognize the Chinese rights in Hunza. He had made it clear even before Hunza war of 1891-92 that “in this quarter [Hunza] we should keep the Chinese and every other power to the north of the barrier formed by the Himalayas and Hindukush, we must...maintain our right to deal with Hunza direct.”

The Viceroy made it clear that the ruler of Hunza had long been a feudatory of the Kashmir Maharaja, receiving a yearly pension and paying tribute. Pertinently, the

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79 Ibid., pp. 238-242.
80 Ibid., p. 264.
81 Knight. Where Three Empires Meet, p. 336.
82 Foreign Dept., Sec. Branch, Ref. No. 57, 30 June, 1888, NAI.
83 Ibid.
Viceroy was not ready to concede the Chinese request for being the part of the Hunza negotiations, but as the matter was related to the British imperial defence, he forwarded it to the home authorities for final decision.  

Considering the wider implications of the Hunza question on the security of the British Indian Empire, Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India, was very anxious to avoid any complications with China at this particular stage. The Chinese diplomats in London on their part took the advantage of this “weakness” of the British government and tried to make the most of it. So the imperial compulsions combined with the Chinese diplomatic pressure persuaded the Secretary of State to concede the Chinese demand. However, the British Indian government expressed serious doubts about the proposal. They agreed only when two clear reservations were obtained by the Foreign Secretary first, that the Chinese representative was only to be at Hunza as witness and by express invitation from the Viceroy; and secondly, that Chinese participation on this occasion would not be considered a precedent for a similar claim on future occasions.

In the negotiations which took place in the middle of September 1892, Muhammad Nazim Khan, a legitimate son of the former Raja Ghazan Khan, was put on the throne by the British. The British arrangements for Hunza also included the appointment of a British Political officer to supervise the general administration of the state. The subsidy hitherto paid to the state needed to be altogether stopped. In all these proceedings, China was represented by Brevet Brigadier-General Chang Hung Chow.

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84 Foreign. Sec., B K.W. No. 265, March, 1892, NAI.
85 Foreign Dept., Sec. Branch, Ref. No. 128, 5 March 1892, NAI.
86 Secretary of State to Government of India, Foreign, Sec. E, Nos. 17-18, 18 March 1892, NAI.
87 Government of India to Resident, 12 May 1892, encl. in Government of India to Secretary of State. Foreign Dept., Secret-F, Nos. 625-26, NAI.
Chang Hung was considered only as an "honoured spectator" and not as an active participant.\(^8\)

The state of Nagar, it was decided, ought to be restored to Jafar Khan who had not taken part in the recent fight. A British Political officer was also appointed in Nagar and the subsidy hitherto enjoyed by its rulers must be stopped.\(^9\)

It is pertinent to note here that in the war with Hunza and Nagar, the British force—the Hunza-Nagar Field Force—consisted of some 600 Jammu and Kashmir State troops out of a total strength of under a thousand men. Interestingly, the post-war settlement provided that the cost for the British administrative supervision over the states of Hunza and Nagar should be borne by the treasury of Jammu and Kashmir. The expenses also included the construction of roads and other similar works necessary for imperial purposes. In other words, the state of Jammu and Kashmir, with Maharaja utterly powerless was made to bear, willingly or unwillingly, the large part of the cost of British Indian defence in this crucial sector.\(^10\)

As soon as Durand, the Gilgit Agent was free from the Hunza-Nagar war, he shifted his attention from there, as there were reports of the unrest in the two other tribal states: Chilas and Chitral. Practically since the re-establishment of the Gilgit Agency in 1889 Chilas had maintained a persistent attitude of hostility towards it. At the end of

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8 Durand, *The Making of a Frontier*, p. 265; India to Resident, 12 May 1892, encl. in Government of India to Secretary of State, Foreign Dept., Secret-F, Nos. 625-26, NAI.


10 The Gilgit Agency garrison had originally, except in the time of crisis as during the Hunza war, consisted almost entirely of the Jammu and Kashmir troops (over 2,000 in number). Most of the cost was born by the Kashmir treasury. It was not until 1913 that the British were able to find troops for Gilgit, which were, so to say, their own. In that year the Corps of Gilgit Scouts was founded. The Scouts were recruited locally from within the area of the Gilgit Agency trained and commanded by the British officers. Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy 1846-1990*, pp. 56-7.
1891 the state openly assumed an attitude of defiance and expelled the Kashmir Agent from Chilas. In the first place, the government of India decided to further strengthen the Gilgit Agency by increasing its staff in order to control the tribes and states along the northern frontier of Kashmir. While dispatching two Political and four Military Officers to Gilgit, Lansdowne remarked that, “the near approach of the Russians renders it necessary for us to keep Political Officers in both Chitral and Hunza, to obtain early information and to counteract Russian activity.”

The British soon got an opportunity to attack Chilas when the ruler of Gor, a small principality at the Kashmir frontiers pleaded with the British to help him against the ruler of Chilas. For Durand it was too good an opportunity to establish the complete British control over Chilas. Accordingly, on 11 November 1892, Surgeon Major Robertson, the Assistant Agent at Gilgit, was asked to lead an expedition of Chilas on the pretext of protecting the Gor tribe. The Chilas forces fought desperately but could not hold their ground in the face of the powerful Imperial Service Troops, and with the result, Chilas was occupied. The Imperial Service Troops were ordered by the Gilgit Agent to remain stationed there till a man of his choice was found to be put on the throne of Chilas.

In the meantime, the situation at Chitral had taken a sudden turn which persuaded the British Indian government to further reconsider its policy towards the northern frontiers of Jammu and Kashmir. With the death of Aman-ul-Mulk in 1892, Chitral entered into a period marked by anarchy and murders. Both Afghanistan and the British

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91 Government of India to Secretary of State, 19 Oct. 1892, Foreign Dept., Progs. Nos. 897-903, Part A. NAI.
Indian government backed the candidates of their choice. Finally Nizam-ul-Mulk—with the help and backing of the British Gilgit Agent—defeated Sher Afzal, the Afghan-backed contender and ascended the throne himself. Nizam-ul-Mulk, at the time of his deal with the British, had promised that if he should succeed in his attempt to secure the throne he would agree to the British officers being stationed in Chitral and to the establishment of a telegraph line between Gilgit and his territory. As soon as Nizam-ul-Mulk sat on the throne, a British mission led by Robertson and accompanied by Younghusband and Lieut. Gordon with an escort of 50 Sikh soldiers, was sent to Chitral to help the ruler to secure his throne and to safeguard the British interests there. On reaching Chitral, the mission reported that people had not reconciled themselves to the rule of Nizam-ul-Mulk and were up in arms against him; the Afghan lobby was still powerful and, by the aid and support of the Amir of Afghanistan, was trying to dislodge the British backed candidate. Sensing that the British interests were in jeopardy, Robertson himself decided to return to Gilgit but left behind the whole British contingent at Chitral under the command of Younghusband and Lieutenant Gordon.

Now the task before the government of India was to secure the permanent British interests in Chilas and Chitral in the face of the Russian advance upon the Pamirs. The question was discussed in the Viceroy’s Council at the beginning of June 1893, and the majority favoured the retention of Chilas by the Imperial forces and the stationing of a permanent British Officer with an escort of the Imperial Service Troops in Chitral.

Though there were a few dissenting voices against the complete British control over these tribes and argued that the continuous interference in these states might lead to a large scale uprising against the Gilgit Agency, Lansdowne believed that the presence of
Imperial Service Troops in Chilas, along with the offer of a subsidy and an assurance that the British Indian government had no desire to annex the country, would not lead to any trouble. On the contrary, it would impress upon the Chilas that “the [British] were strong enough to hold [their] own.”

Lansdowne laid great stress on Chilas as an important factor for the safety of the Gilgit Agency. He declared that Chilas was indeed the ‘sheet anchor’ of British policy upon the northern frontiers. With regard to Chitral the Viceroy argued that it could not be left “unprotected” and “alone”; “it must be under the influence of Russia or of the Amir, or under ours. We do not mean it to be under Russian influence, and we do not believe that it would be safe, or just, to hand it over to the Amir. We must, therefore, look after it ourselves.”

He remarked that if left “alone”, Chitral would be used by the Afghan ruler as a launch-pad for the intrigues upon the northern frontiers against the British Indian government. Lansdowne fully agreed with Durand that for the preservation of the British influence upon Chitral it must “remain a portion of the Gilgit Agency.” But the Secretary of State for India was not ready to take any such measure which would increase its liability unless it was proved that there was “absolutely no tolerable alternative.” He was not in favour of any permanent measures for Chitral so long as the results of the Durand Mission to Kabul or the Pamir boundary negotiations were not known. (The provisions of the Durand and Pamir Agreements will be discussed later in this chapter.) So he gave the go-ahead for the British Political Officer

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92 Lansdowne to Brackenbury, 8 April, 1893, Lansdowne Papers/Vii (i), cited in Ghose. Kashmir in Transition, p. 204-5.
93 Lansdowne to Kimberley, 12 Sept. 1893, Lansdowne Papers/IX(e), Ibid.
94 Lansdowne to Kimberley, 11 July 1893, Lansdowne Papers/IX(e), Ibid, p. 106.
95 Kimberley to Lansdowne, 18 August 1893, Ibid.
accompanied by a garrison of Imperial Service Troops, but as a temporary measure. The officer was to act under the supervision of the Gilgit Agency.96

The appointment of the Political officer was “supposed to bring” peace to Chitral; contrarily the British presence and the consequent interference in the internal affairs of Chitral led to an uprising. On January 1, 1895, Nizam-ul-Mulk was murdered by the followers of his younger brother, Amir-ul-Mulk. Amir sent several deputations to Lieut. Gurdon, the British Political Officer at Chitral, asking to recognize him as the de facto ruler of the state, but the officer refused to accept the request of the Amir. Instead, he detained Amir-ul-Mulk and declared Shuja-ul-Mulk, the infant son of Aman-ul-Mulk as the ruler of Chitral. The officer himself acted as regent of the young prince. This led to a general uprising of the people led by Sher Afzal, the fugitive ruler and Umra Khan of Jandol. Consequently, the fort of Chitral was stormed by the rebels led by Sher Afzal.

The attack on the Chitral fort by Sher Afzal created the feeling of uneasiness in the colonial India. The government immediately decided to reinforce the Chitral garrison with the Relief Force from Peshawar. It became necessary because the attempts by the Gilgit Agency to help the British garrison at Chitral had failed due to the attacks by the men of Sher Afzal and Umra Khan on the routes leading to Chitral. The reinforcements helped the British garrison to over-awe the mutineers and with the result, Sher Afzal and Umra Khan raised the siege of the Chitral fort and fled.

The British now decided to retain Chitral under their complete supervision. This, the British thought, was made necessary “keeping in view the strategic importance of

96 Secretary of State to government of India, 1 Sept. 1893, Political and Secret Despatches to India. Ibid., p. 207.
Chitral in the frontier scheme of British Indian Empire. The British gave the impression that if the frontier tribes were left outside the British surveillance: "Russia which had advanced her frontiers to the Hindukush because of the Pamir Agreement would walk in and play all the tribes off against the British." The British also believed that though Afghanistan had been bound by the Durand Agreement not to interfere in Swat, Bajaur, or Chitral but the Amir had always proved to be a hard nut to crack. The agreement with the Amir did not mean that all the threats from Afghanistan were over. So, it was finally decided to retain Chitral under the control of the British. The foreign affairs of the state were brought entirely under the control of the British. In regard to the internal affairs, a British appointed council of regency was appointed to "advise" the young Shuja-ul-Mulk on administrative matters. A British garrison consisting of two battalions of Indian Infantry, two mountain guns and one Company of Sappers were to be stationed in the state.

However, the most important result of the British intervention in the state was produced in the next year when the government of India decided to remove Chitral from the supervision of the Political Agent in Gilgit and was brought under the supervision of Malakand Agency. The Agency was brought into being with the purpose of looking after Chitral and its neighbouring states of Dir and Swat. Thus in 1896 Chitral, which undoubtedly had in 1878 accepted the suzerainty of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir.

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98 Ibid.
99 According to the "Durand Line Agreement" the Amir renounced all claims to Chitral, Swat, Buner, Dir, Chilas, Kurram, and all other areas south-west of the line. Full details of the Agreement will be discussed in the following pages.
was effectively removed from a British administrative relationship with that state and established as an Indian princely state in its own right.\textsuperscript{100}

While the British Agent was strengthening the Gilgit Agency, a new aspect had been added to the question of defence of the northern frontier by the arrival on the Pamirs of certain parties of the Russians whose avowed object was to annex the Great, Little, and Alichur Pamirs. Their activities, as Younghusband\textsuperscript{101} reported, were very brisk, and the officers from the Gilgit Agency were sent up to watch the Russian proceedings. Matters came to a head when on 13 August 1891 Younghusband was expelled from Bozai Gumbaz on the Little Pamirs by a Russian Colonel Yanoff. Whether Bozai Gumbaz was within the Afghan territory, or in the debatable lands outside it, is another matter. It certainly was not in Russian possession, and the forcible expulsion of an accredited British officer was therefore considered by Lansdowne “a piece of great effrontery”.\textsuperscript{102} It created an awkward, if not dangerous, situation for the Indian government. Especially the Russian move to Bozai Gumbaz, if followed by annexation of that territory—as the British authorities apprehended—would bring the “Russians to the crest of the Hindoo Koosh passes”. Immediate measures were, therefore, taken to check further Russian encroachment south of the Hindukush and to strengthen the Gilgit Agency. The Gilgit

\textsuperscript{100} Hashmatullah Khan, \textit{Tarikh-i-Jammu}, p. 887.

\textsuperscript{101} In June 1889 the government of India decided upon sending a small party, under the command of F.E. Younghusband, to examine the northern frontiers of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The general instructions given to him were, to enquire into the means of defending the Leh-Yarkand road (which was used by the British for trade purposes) from the raids from Hunza; to explore the main range of Mustagh Mountains, from the Karakoram Pass to the Kilik Pass at the bend of the Hindukush, which had been previously explored by Colonel Lockhart’s Mission; to make a rough survey of the regions explored; and finally to write a report upon the strategic value of this northern frontier with a view to any possible invasion of Kashmir from the direction of the Pamirs or Yarkand. E.F. Younghusband, \textit{The Northern Frontier of Kashmir}, (London: 1890, repr., Delhi: 1973), pp. iii-iv.

\textsuperscript{102} Indian Officer, \textit{Russia’s March towards India}, (London: 1894), p. 261.
Agent was asked not to allow the Russians to advance to Chitral or Hunza, or to permit them to descend the Ishkoman, Yasin or Chalt Valley. Hunza and Nagar were warned that no foreign armed parties were to be allowed to cross the passes into their territory. To strengthen the Gilgit Agency, a guard of 200 Gurkhas was added to it. On the diplomatic front, the British government registered their protests at St. Petersburg against the Russian movements on the Pamirs and the treatment meted out to Younghusband.\(^{103}\)

There was a lot of confusion on the northern frontiers and this confusion was confounded by the activities of the Amir of Afghanistan. As already mentioned, the Amir—though warned from time to time by the British government—had never given up his efforts to bring the tribal chiefs along the Kashmir frontiers under his influence. In 1892, making a forward move, Amir occupied Asmar, a small tribal state just south of the Chitral territory.\(^{104}\) Justifying the occupation, he declared that “Asmar as a matter of urgency [had to be] occupied, because it was the frontier of [Afghanistan] and was included in the limits of Kunar [province of the country].”\(^{105}\) As the news of the Afghan occupation of Asmar reached the British authorities they became anxious. The government of India refused to recognize the Amir’s rights to Asmar; they even asked him to vacate the territory, but the Amir refused. The government of India believed that the occupation of Asmar had brought Amir to within forty miles of Chitral which was bound to engender a sense of general uneasiness, if not really “very serious troubles” among the tribes. Though the British Indian government was not ready to accept the Amir’s claim to Asmar, yet the government did not want to take any direct confrontation

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\(^{105}\) Amir to Viceroy, 25 Feb. 1892, encl. in Government of India to secretary of state, Foreign Dept., Political A, 24 May 1892, Nos. 549-51, NAI.
with the Amir and, therefore, contended themselves with a warning that any further breach of peace in the tribal regions, if attributable to the Amir’s aggression, would force the government of India to ask him to vacate the territory.106

However, the Amir of Afghanistan continued his forward move; he reoccupied Somatash, from which he had been forced out by the British in 1891. Soon afterwards, the Amir advanced a claim to Bozai Gumbaz. This put the government of India really in a fix. Since Younghusband’s expulsion from that territory the government of India had been unable to determine whether Bozai Gumbaz actually belonged to Afghanistan or the “no-man’s land” beyond the Afghan frontiers. When the complaint against Younghusband’s expulsion from that territory was initially made at St. Petersburg, it was claimed that Bozai Gumbaz was in Afghan Wakhan. But only a few days later it was affirmed that Bozai Gumbaz lay beyond Afghan territories. The vacillation of the Indian government not only irritated the Foreign Office in London; it annoyed the Amir as well.

Despite the fact that the ownership of Bozai Gumbaz was uncertain, the English Foreign Office pressed Russia to apologize for the conduct of Yanoff in expelling Younghusband. Initially the Russian government was not impressed, but finally rendered “full apology”. The British was still in the celebratory mood over this diplomatic triumph when the news arrived that the Russian forces under the command of Yanoff turned out the Afghan forces from Somatash and occupied it. This turn of events whipped the government of India into action.

106 Amir to Viceroy, 3 August 1892, encl. in Government of India to Secretary of State, Foreign Dept. Sec. E, 13 September 1892, Nos. 799-802. NAI.
The strengthening of British position on the northern frontiers of the British Indian Empire was not sufficient. They thought that something must be done on the diplomatic front too. They thought it better to sit on the negotiation table with both Russia and Afghanistan to end the worrisome situation created by the Russian and Afghan activities on the Pamirs. The colonial government thought that the occupation of Somatash first by Afghanistan, followed by Russia necessitated a clear understanding about the extent of Anglo-Afghan and Anglo-Russian boundaries on the Pamirs. Keeping this end in view, Lansdowne the Viceroy suggested to the Home authorities that the diplomatic pressure should be put on Russia to withdraw her forces from Somatash and arrange for a joint delimitation. The Home authorities readily accepted the proposal and instructed Morier to open consultations with Russia.

Though the Russian government received the British diplomatic mission regarding the Pamir question, no basis for a discussion could be agreed upon for quite some time because the Russians laid down certain basic conditions on which the negotiations could be carried forward. The first demand that St. Petersburg made was that the Russian frontiers must run upon the Pamirs itself. This was in total contrast to the agreement signed between the British and the Russian government.\textsuperscript{107} Stall, the Russian

\textsuperscript{107} The “Russian Peril” proved the key factor in the formulation of the English policy in respect of Central Asia, Afghanistan and the trans-Indus area. In this respect two schools of thought emerged in England. One advocated the “Close Border Policy” while the second was in favour of the “Forward Policy”. Correspondence and overtures were made between the Russians and the English in respect of Central Asia. It was agreed in principle that a neutral zone be acknowledged in Central Asia, for which Afghanistan would be an ideal place. But instead the agreement of 1873 came out under which, states James W. Spain, “The Oxus was accepted as the basis of the yet un-demarcated northern boundary of Afghanistan. The main results were: (1) establishment of the Oxus as the dividing line between Afghan and Russian territory; (2) Russia’s formal exclusion of Afghanistan from its sphere of influence, and (3) acceptance by the British of eventual absorption by Russia of all of the khanates north of the Oxus, including areas once under the suzerainty of the Amir of Kabul. By this agreement Afghanistan became a buffer state between Russia and
Ambassador in London, also demanded that Afghanistan should be persuaded to evacuate Roshan and Shignan.¹⁰⁸

The colonial Indian government was ready to give up its claims on Roshan and Shignan, even at the risk of alienating the Afghan ruler, but it was determined not to allow Russia a line of frontier which would afford her a happy hunting ground upon the slopes of the Hindukush. But the Russian demand would mean exactly what the British government wished to avoid. All the British wanted was to keep Russia at a safe distance from the Imperial frontiers. Accordingly, in reply to Russian claims, the British demanded status quo on the Upper Oxus west of Lake Victoria. In regard to the Russian claims of Roshan and Shignan, though Lansdowne suggested that the British Foreign Office should begin by standing out for the retention of Roshan and Shignan, they could eventually fall back on Wood’s Lake line as a compromise. This was precisely the stand taken by Rosebery in negotiations with the Russian government.

British India. Neither the British nor the Russians consulted the Amir in making the arrangement and therefore Afghanistan never reconciled to the terms of the agreement, which created anxiety at occasions. The Russians too did not keep themselves to the provisions of the treaty. The Russians advanced, in Central Asia, towards Afghanistan and occupied Merv in 1884, in its North-Western corner. They now had kept their eyes on Panjdeh, which under the terms of the Treaty of 1873 was the territory of Afghanistan. The attempts of a peaceful settlement of the dispute bore no fruits and the Russian troops occupied Panjdeh on 30 March 1885. Amir Abdur Rahman, who was in Rawalpindi at the time, by suggesting that Russians may retain Panjdeh but the Zulfiqar Pass would remain in the Afghans hands, averted the would-be war for the possession of Panjdeh. The Russians accepted the suggestion and in July 1886 a Boundary Commission was set to demarcate the boundary between Russia and Afghanistan, in light of the protocol signed on 10 September 1885. The Commission completed its work in June 1888 and the final boundaries between Afghanistan and Russia were confirmed on 12 June 1888. Afghanistan’s boundary with Russia was thus defined and demarcated but its boundary with British India was still undefined and un-demarcated. There were areas upon which both the sides had either their claims or kept their coveted eyes or wanted to be under their control or sphere of influence.” See, James W. Spain, The Pathan Borderland, (Karachi: 1985), pp. 123-5.

¹⁰⁸ The Amir of Afghanistan had been in possession of the trans-Oxus provinces of Roshan and Shignan ever since the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1873, but the colonial Indian government had never accepted the Amir’s rights to these territories.
Initially, the negotiations between the two governments were not making any considerable progress, but once both the sides flexed their stands, the prospectus of the negotiations seemed hopeful. The British government now set out to persuade the Amir of Afghanistan to surrender Roshan and Shignan as a compromise. The colonial government was ready to allow the Amir to retain the strip of Wakhan in return for the surrender of Roshan and Shignan. The government was also considering some concessions to the Amir elsewhere on the frontier to compensate for the territories he would lose. With this end in view, the British government asked the Viceroy Lord Lansdowne to send a diplomatic mission to Kabul in order to explain the Amir “the course of negotiations with Russian government regarding the frontier of Upper Oxus and in the direction of the Pamirs.”

Giving effect to this British policy, Lansdowne dispatched a mission under the command of Sir Mortimer Durand to Kabul, which left Peshawar on 9 September 1893. The Durand Mission had two main purposes: to persuade the Amir to evacuate Roshan and Shignan and to settle the Anglo-Afghan frontier from Chitral downward. There had been negotiations between the British colonial government and Afghanistan in regard to the Anglo-Afghan frontier even before the Durand Mission, but the nature of discussions used to be somewhat different. Earlier, the emphasis had been indeed upon the tribal regions between Kashmir and Afghanistan, but the Russian threat upon the Pamirs changed the entire nature of the talks. For British, while the main aim of Durand Mission was to arrest the Russian advance towards the Pamirs and the Hindukush, so that Jammu and Kashmir with its dependencies and other tribal regions within the British sphere of influence could be safe from the Russian intrigues, the Afghan Amir wanted the British
Mission to settle his eastern and southern boundaries with them. The Afghan Amir’s emphasis on setting out his boundaries with India persuaded him to soften his position over Roshan and Shignan. Amir also accepted to retain Wakhan under his suzerainty. He also promised non-interference in the frontier states of Jammu and Kashmir. In return of this, Abdur Rehman was allowed to keep Asmar within his territories. All this came in the form of an Agreement which was signed between the two sides, concluded on 12 November 1893 by Amir Abdur Rahman and Henry Mortimer Durand, commonly known as Durand Line Agreement.

After the successful completion of Durand Mission, the settlement about the Pamirs appeared to be well within sight. The British overcame the first major hurdle by convincing the Afghan ruler to evacuate Roshan and Shignan for Russia. In return for Roshan and Shignan, St. Petersburg agreed to accept a line east of Lake Victoria as a frontier line between the two countries and leaving Bozai Gumbaz to the British sphere of influence. Thus the acceptance of Lake Victoria, which was to run from the east end of the Lake along the neighbouring mountain crests till it reached the Chinese frontier,

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110 The single-page “Durand Line Agreement” which contains seven short articles laid down that the eastern and southern frontier of the Afghan dominions, from Wakhan to the Persian border, would follow the line agreed upon by both the sides. “The Government of India would at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of Afghanistan, and the Amir should at no time interfere in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of India.” The British Government also agreed to allow the Amir to retain Asmar and the valley above it. In return, the Afghan ruler pledged to exercise no interference in Swat, Bajaur, or Chitral. The British Government also agreed to leave to Amir the Birmaal, who relinquished his claim to the rest of the Waziri country and Dawar. “The frontier line would thereafter be laid down in detail and demarcated, wherever this might be practicable and desirable, by joint British and Afghan commissions, having due regard to the existing local rights of villages adjoining the frontier. Both the Government of India and His Highness the Amir undertake that any differences of detail, should be settled in a friendly spirit, so as to remove for the future as far as possible all causes of doubt and misunderstanding between the two Governments.” For further readings see, Sultan Mahomed Khan, Ed. The Life of Abdur Rahman: Amir of Afghanistan, with a New Introduction by M. E. Yapp, Vols. 2. (London: 1900, reprint in Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1980), vol. 2, pp. 154-5.
leaving Bozai Gumbaz within the British sphere of influence as the frontier line by Russia, persuaded the British Foreign Office to proceed cordially with the negotiations.

The final agreement signed between the British government and Russia on 11 March 1895 with regard to Pamirs in Central Asia is known as Pamir Agreement. The Agreement recognized Lake Victoria as the southern boundary of the Russian sphere of influence in that region. Those portions of Roshan and Shignan lying on the right bank of the river Oxus were shorn from the territories of the Amir of Afghanistan, and Russia was to be allowed to annex the Gund and Shakedara Valleys. The British and Russian spheres were to be divided by a strip of neutral territory, and Russia was to be effectually debarred from entrance to the passes in the Hindukush Mountains leading to Hunza, Nagar and Chitral.

So, it were the Russian and Afghan activities in the trans-Oxus region which forced the British authorities to engage themselves with these two key players in the region to reach an agreement because the primary concern of the British was to secure the frontiers of the British Indian Empire. It was the outcome of these negotiations which provided the basis for the future British policy towards the north-western frontier of the Indian Empire. So far as the northern frontier was concerned, both the Afghan and Russian missions secured all that was necessary for the safety of Kashmir and its dependencies. The combination of the 1893 Durand Line and the 1895 Anglo-Russian
Pamir Agreement created the background for the subsequent history of the Northern Frontier.

The Russo-Afghan conflict in the Pamirs also prompted the British Indian government to strengthen their position at the Jammu and Kashmir frontiers. The government believed that though a large scale Russian army could not descend south of the Hindukush but it apprehended that there was always a threat of the small and lightly equipped Russian troops to descend south of mountain slopes which would create disturbances in the frontier tribes. So, as a precautionary measure, Lansdowne decided to consolidate the British influence in the frontier region. This, he thought, would be done by further strengthening the Gilgit Agency. As he observed, the Gilgit outpost of the Indian Empire ought to be “a centre of British influence” upon the northern frontiers of Kashmir.

The Gilgit Lease

As has already been discussed in the previous chapter that the British ascendancy had reached its climax during the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh and the government of India had a strong influence on the administrative affairs of the Jammu and Kashmir state. However, with the turn of the twentieth century, due to the growing nationalist sentiments in colonial British India against the imperialist rule, the government began to loosen their grip over the administrative affairs of Jammu and Kashmir. With the result, by the time of the accession of the new ruler Maharaja Hari Singh in 1925, most of the curbs on the powers on the Kashmir administration had been lifted and the Kashmir Maharaja began to enjoy considerable autonomy in the governance of his state.
Obviously there was a clash of interests between the British imperial government and the Dogra Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. This clash manifested itself in the fast deteriorating relations between the British Agent at Gilgit and the Jammu and Kashmir government.

At Gilgit there now existed a form of “dyarchy”, in which the matters of defence, foreign relations and communications were the concern of the British, but the Maharaja still had the responsibility of civil government which he exercised through a governor, Wazir-i-Wazarat, who also acted as the Maharaja’s representative in matters arising from the tributary relationship between the Dogra rulers and states like Hunza and Nagar. Maharaja Hari Singh was not happy with this state of affairs at Gilgit because the British Agent often interfered in the administrative affairs of the Wazarat. This resulted in considerably undermining the position of the Wazir-i-Wazarat as the representative of the Jammu and Kashmir government, and in developing a sort of “dyarchy” which was not a good omen for the administrative affairs of Gilgit.\(^\text{112}\)

The proactive role of the Gilgit Agent also made it clear that the Jammu and Kashmir government appeared to be helpless and the Maharaja of Kashmir was not sure about the boundaries of his state. He knew that the region belonged to him by conquest but he was equally aware of the fact that the then British government of India had practically usurped the region, which was now administered by the Political Agent at Gilgit in the name of the crown.\(^\text{113}\)


\(^{113}\) Ibid.
After the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the establishment of the Socialist regime there, Britain again found herself at loggerheads with this new Russian ideology. As expected, Jammu and Kashmir felt the repercussions of this new Anglo-Russian rivalry. The British imperialist government thought that while the formidable geography of the Karakoram pass of the north-west frontier would most probably prevent any Russian army to pass by, it was not an adequate barrier against individuals. The Political Department feared that Russian agents would be more easily able to cross into British India to spread the Bolshevik “virus” among Indian politicians. Already, in the eyes of the British, they were dangerously exposed to such infection. Thus, the northern frontier, a substantial section of the British Indian officials thought, was again under threat from Russia. The remedy, they suggested to this threat, was that the Gilgit Agency be taken under direct British control and the system of “dyarchy” be terminated.114

In 1931, as a result of the impact of the world financial crisis on the budget of the government of India, the Kashmir Darbar, which was already paying the half of the cost, was asked to bear the three quarters of the total budget on the Gilgit Agency. Maharaja Hari Singh, whose authority was greatly undermined by the British representative at Gilgit, wanted to end this embarrassing state of affairs once for all. He came up with his own alternatives to the British proposal. He offered that he would agree to take the entire responsibility for the defence of the Gilgit Agency, paying all the costs provided that the system of “dyarchy” was terminated and complete authority returned to the Wazir-i-Wazarat. Alternatively, the government of India could establish both military and civil

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control over the political districts and the Gilgit Wazarat area which lay to the north of the Indus.\footnote{Lamb, \textit{Kashmir A Disputed Legacy 1846-1990}, pp. 60-1.}

The government of India availed themselves of this opportunity to further undermine the sovereignty of Jammu and Kashmir at Gilgit and to establish their complete ascendancy on the frontiers of Jammu and Kashmir. They readily accepted the second option and decided to ask for the transfer of all rights in the region to the British. An agreement was signed on 26 March 1935 between the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and the representatives of the British Indian government by which the Gilgit Wazarat, north of the Indus and its dependencies were leased out to the British for a period of sixty years. All civil and military administration of the area was transferred to the government of India. The agreement mentioned that “in normal circumstances” no British Indian troops shall be dispatched throughout the leased territory. The British would rely on the Corps of Gilgit Scouts.\footnote{Foreign, Pol, Sec., Frontier, File No. 366-X of 1935, NAI.} On 1 August 1935 the Political Agent in Gilgit, Major G. Kirkbride, formally assumed his new responsibilities for the leased areas. Thus, from that moment the region passed right out of the orbit of the Jammu and Kashmir state government. On the eve of partition in 1947, however, the British surrendered their lease with the result that, in theory, sovereignty reverted to Jammu and Kashmir.\footnote{Some confusion appears to exist as to the precise limits of Jammu and Kashmir State in the Gilgit region. Gilgit which now forms the part of the Pakistan administered Kashmir (until 2009 Gilgit along with Baltistan was called the “Northern Areas”; now it is “Gilgit-Baltistan”), was shown by many British maps up to 1947 outside Kashmir with the exception of Gilgit town and its immediate surroundings. India, however, has always regarded the entire Gilgit Agency as being part of Kashmir. The area which was leased out was only 1, 480 square miles, while the whole Gilgit Agency was over 14, 500 square miles.}
Conclusion

The Russian advances towards the southern and eastern regions by mid-nineteenth century, the deteriorating relations with the Amir of Afghanistan and the territorial contiguity with China made the British Indian Government to give a serious thought to the question of defence of the northern frontier. With this end in view, the British decided to support the Kashmir Darbar in stabilizing its influence in the northern tracts of Dardistan, in return of a British Agent to be stationed at Gilgit with the purpose of securing the north-western frontiers of their Indian Empire. Gilgit was considered as “a watch tower to the defence of the Indian Empire” and the Agent who remained stationed there till the British withdrew from Indian subcontinent as “a sentry at a vulnerable point of the India frontier.” The establishment of the British Residency and the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh resulted in a firmer British control over the administrative affairs of Jammu and Kashmir which in turn helped them to use Kashmir as a frontline state more effectively; without any opposition from its government. Interestingly, Jammu and Kashmir not only acted as a frontline state but was made to bear, willingly or unwillingly, the large part of the cost of the defence of British Indian Empire.

Yet, by the lease agreement the British certainly considered that they had acquired rights over the whole Gilgit region and not merely the leased area.
The creation of Jammu and Kashmir State on 16 March 1846, closely followed by the uprising of 1857 and the subsequent Queen’s declaration protecting the territorial rights of Indian princes, granted it protection from complete merger in British India but short of that the British established complete sway on its internal and external affairs. The Treaty of Amritsar, which was instrumental in the creation of the state, had granted somewhat a “special status” to the state giving it in the “independent possession” of the Maharaja so far as its internal affairs were concerned. But not withstanding that guarantee we see the state not only reduced to the position of any other princely state of British India but in effect witnessed more interest and intervention in its affairs because of its geopolitical and strategic importance as a frontline state. As the state assumed an important position in the security of the British Empire from the emerging Russian threat and since the defence from foreign threat was the responsibility of the British themselves it provided them a convenient excuse to intervene in the affairs of the state. While the treaty only provided the broader framework for conducting the relations the actual policy towards the state flowed, to a significant degree, from the geo-political and strategic considerations of the English East India Company ever alert to the dangers of Afghan or, indirectly, Russian intervention on the north-western frontier of its expanding Indian dominion.

The formation of the state was made by bringing together territories formerly separate and part of diverse political histories and placed under the control of Gulab Singh, the erstwhile Raja of Jammu, a former subordinate of Lahore and an ally of the British in their wars against the Sikhs. The creation of the state is, thus, seen to be a
major stroke of the British policy. It was in the interest of maintaining a stable polity on its sensitive north-western frontier that the East India Company decided to strengthen the hands of the Dogra rulers to exercise their authority in the newly founded state. But at the same time, the British vested a territorially limited and a lesser degree of powers in the hands of the Dogra rulers.

Going by the literal interpretation of the clauses of the Treaty of Amritsar there was a very limited scope for the British intervention in the affairs of Jammu and Kashmir. The Treaty of Amritsar recognized Maharaja Gulab Singh in “independent possession” of Kashmir. The treaty no doubt gave both the parties some rights and obligations. But because of the overwhelming power and prestige of one party over the other, the British always had the upper hand. Since Gulab Singh was at the receiving end, the British were always in a better position to use the provisions of the treaty to their own advantage. More importantly, if the British were recognized by the treaty as arbiters in any dispute arising with the neighboring states, how could their arbitration be challenged with regard to the dispute with the British itself? These inner contradictions in the treaty gave them the role of both the judge and the jury in any dispute and they successfully gave their every act a legal cover of the treaty.

A careful reading of the Treaty of Amritsar makes it clear that so much ambiguity was left in the document that anything could be made out of it. The British would always be in search of an opportunity to tighten its noose around the Kashmir Darbar, and even if such an opportunity did not come its way, the government could still invoke any of the justifications that it had used in the case of the other states to tamper with the status of the state. The capacity to act in such a manner lay in its military and
political strength and could not be curbed by any treaty or engagement whatsoever. Whenever there was a controversy regarding any issue—be it imposition of the Resident, stationing of the British troops or appointment of any British Indian in the services of the Maharaja—the British argument always prevailed whether convincingly or unconvincingly.

The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was, right from its emergence, included within the pale of British Paramountcy—a relationship whose limits were undefined and depended solely on the configuration of relative forces at a given time. Further, having created the state for the furtherance of their imperial interests always expected the Maharaja to serve those interests and give them precedence to even his own personal, family or state interests. In the event of a failure on the part of the Kashmir Darbar to play its expected role, the British Indian authorities felt justified to exercise their paramount power. The means they would employ and to what extent, would depend upon the exigency of the situation and the demands of the time.

Broadly speaking, the British intervention was made on two grounds: the first being the security of the state, as the state of Jammu and Kashmir had to be used as a frontline state, and the second being Maharaja’s capacity to govern his subjects with “justice”. The British intervention in the state started with the appointment of the Officer on Special Duty to look after the interests of the European tourists in the state. The mal-administration of the Kashmir Darbar, the British failure in the Afghan war of 1878, the ruthless criticism of the Anglo-Indian and British press of the Governments’ policies, particularly of the Kashmir Government in the famine of 1877, and the political nature of the activities of the Officer on Special Duty persuaded the British Indian authorities to
provide for "efficient" political ascendency and supervision in Jammu and Kashmir which manifested itself in the establishment of the British Residency in Kashmir in 1885 and stripping the Maharaja of all his powers in 1889. As revealed in the preceding chapters although the British intervened primarily to secure their imperialistic motives, they presented themselves in the guise of benevolent power. This "benevolence" indeed resulted in some positive changes in the state. It exposed the state structures to the major influences of British India. It also brought the princely state and the people into closer contact with the ideologies and movements prevalent in British India. The half-hearted state-led land and educational reforms created a context in which the Kashmiri leadership launched their educational and other reform movements. It was after consolidating their position through these reform movements that the Kashmiri leadership with the aid and advice of different political and social organizations of British India, particularly the Punjab, began pressuring the state to play a more active role to address the socio-economic and political issues of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The research theme also emphasized that the British measures of appointing a Resident and removing Maharaja Pratap Singh from the throne were dictated more by the imperial considerations than the concern for internal mal-administration in the state. The establishment of the Residency and the deposition of the Maharaja cleared the way for the imperial British Indian government to implement their comprehensive defense scheme without any opposition from the Kashmir Darbar.

British imperial policy towards the state of Jammu and Kashmir in the late 19th century was guided primarily by fear of a Russian advance towards India through the Pamir mountains, as well as by events in the expanse of land north of the Hindu Kush and
Himalayas, known as Turkestan, the eastern part of which was under the nominal rule of China. In addition, the British were continually troubled by the independent policy adopted by the Amir of Afghanistan, whose lands also extended as far as the northwestern frontier of the sub-continent. On account of its strategic location, the state of Jammu and Kashmir appeared to be a sort of buffer against potential incursions from Russia, Afghanistan and China into the sub-continent. Provided the British could maintain a workable alliance with the maharaja they would not be obliged to incur the expense of fortifying the northern frontier themselves. With this end in view, the British decided to support the Kashmir Darbar in stabilizing its influence in the northern tracks of Dardistan, in return of a British Agent to be stationed at Gilgit with the purpose of securing the north-western frontiers of their Indian Empire. Gilgit was considered as “a watch tower to the defence of the Indian Empire” and the Agent who remained stationed there till the British withdrew from Indian subcontinent as “a sentry at a vulnerable point of the India frontier”. The establishment of the British Residency and the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh resulted in a firmer British control over the administrative affairs of Jammu and Kashmir which in turn helped them to use Kashmir as a frontline state more effectively without any opposition from its government. Interestingly, Jammu and Kashmir not only acted as a frontline state but was made to bear, willingly or unwillingly, the large part of the cost of the defence of British Indian Empire.

So it is clear from what this study has shown that the British Indian government was always in search of an opportunity to maintain a firm grip over the administrative affairs of Jammu and Kashmir in order to fulfill their imperial interests. The British secured this decisive power in the state especially from deposition of Maharaja Pratap
Singh till second decade of the twentieth century. Though the British adopted the pretence of being the guardians of the people of Kashmir against the very ruling dynasty imposed by them, the supreme power held by them in the state was primarily used to take care of the best imperial interests and the bogey of mal-administration was raised to make room for further intervention. However, the physical relief it provided to the people of Jammu and Kashmir made them, at least, look better imperialists in the eyes of the people.
Appendix I

Relevant Portions of the Treaty of Lahore

March 9, 1846

Article 3

The Maharaja (of Lahore) cedes to the Honourable Company, in perpetual sovereignty, all his forts, territories and rights, in the Dooab, or country, hill and plain, situated between the Rivers Beas and Sutlej.

Article 4

The British Government having demanded from the Lahore State, as indemnification for the expenses of the war, in addition to the cession of territory described in Article 3, payment of one and a half crores of rupees; and the Lahore Government being unable to pay the whole of this sum at this time, or to give security, satisfactory to the British Government, for its eventual payment; the Maharaja cedes to the Honourable Company, in perpetual sovereignty, as equivalent for one crore of rupees, all his forts, territories, rights, and interests, in the Hill Countries, which are situated between the Rivers Beas and Indus, including the Provinces of Cashmere and Hazarah.

Article 12

In consideration of the services rendered by Rajah Golab Sing, of Jammoo, to the Lahore State, towards procuring the restoration of the relations of amity between the Lahore and British Governments, the Maharajah hereby agrees to recognize the independent sovereignty of Raja Golab Sing by separate agreement between himself and the British Government, with the dependencies thereof, which may have been in the Rajah’s possession since the time of the late Maharajah Kurruk Sing; and the British Government.
in consideration of the good conduct of Rajah Golab Sing, also agrees to recognize his independence in such territories, and to admit him to the privileges of a separate treaty with the British Government.

**Article 13**

In the event of any dispute or difference arising between the Lahore State and Rajah Golab Sing, the same shall be referred to the arbitration of the British Government; and its decision the Maharajah engages to abide.
Appendix II

Treaty of Amritsar (March 16, 1846)

The treaty between the British Government on the one part and Maharajah Gulab Singh of Jammu on the other concluded on the part of the British Government by Frederick Currie, Esq. and Brevet-Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the orders of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., one of her Britannic Majesty's most Honorable Privy Council, Governor-General of the possessions of the East India Company, to direct and control all the affairs in the East Indies and by Maharajah Gulab Singh in person-

Article 1

The British Government transfers and makes over for ever in independent possession to Maharajah Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Indus and the westward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahol, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March, 1846.

Article 2

The eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing article to Maharajah Gulab Singh shall be laid down by the Commissioners appointed by the British Government and Maharajah Gulab Singh respectively for that purpose and shall be defined in a separate engagement after survey.
Article 3
In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing article Maharajah Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees (Nanukshahee), fifty lakhs to be paid on or before the 1st October of the current year, A.D., 1846.

Article 4
The limits of territories of Maharajah Gulab Singh shall not be at any time changed without concurrence of the British Government.

Article 5
Maharajah Gulab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes or question that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore or any other neighboring State, and will abide by the decision of the British Government.

Article 6
Maharajah Gulab Singh engages for himself and heirs to join, with the whole of his Military Forces, the British troops when employed within the hills or in the territories adjoining his possessions.

Article 7
Maharajah Gulab Singh engages never to take to retain in his service any British subject nor the subject of any European or American State without the consent of the British Government.
Article 8
Maharajah Gulab Singh engages to respect in regard to the territory transferred to him, the provisions of Articles V, VI and VII of the separate Engagement between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar, dated 11th March, 1846.

Article 9
The British Government will give its aid to Maharajah Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

Article 10
Maharajah Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government and will in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Cashmere shawls.

This Treaty of ten articles has been this day settled by Frederick Currie, Esq. and Brever-Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under directions of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Hardinge, Governor-General, on the part of the British Government and by Maharajah Gulab Singh in person, and the said Treaty has been this day ratified by the seal of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Hardinge, Governor-General.

Done at Amritsar the sixteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, corresponding with the seventeenth day of Rubee-ul-Awal (1262 Hijri).

(Signed) II. Hardinge (seal)
(Signed) F. Currie
(Signed) H.M. Lawrence
Appendix III

Did Gulab Singh pay for Kashmir?*

According to the third article of the Treaty of Amritsar, Gulab Singh was required to pay the stipulated sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees in two installments, "fifty lacs... on ratification of this treaty, and twenty-five lacs on or before the 1st of October of the current year, A.D. 1846." Some sources, like the anonymous author of *Kashmir-ke-Halaat*, have stated that the sale was a hoax, and that the British never really collected the required sum form the Dogra ruler.¹ Such gossip continues to be heard occasionally on the Indian subcontinent till this day. However, there is substantial evidence that, though late, Gulab Singh did pay the amount in full. In a letter dated May 12, 1846, Hardinge informed Ellenborough, that the Maharaja "has paid his first installment of 50 lacs."² The Governor-General communicated similar information to the Secret Committee in September.³ Even more important, however, is the following table of payments prepared on October 10, 1848, by the Company’s financial department at Calcutta, which clearly indicates that by the end of July 1848 Gulab Singh had paid most of his debt:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In 1845/46</td>
<td>497,204-4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1846-47</td>
<td>5,619,581-10-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1847-48</td>
<td>858,541-12-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>97,997-13-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>48,156-7-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>146,154-4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,121,481-15-11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Balance due to the British Government on the 31st July 1848 378,518-0-1²

² Ellenborough Papers, re. 30/12/21, no. 7, cited in Ibid, fn 2.

* This Appendix is reproduced from Bawa Satinder Singh, *Jammu Fox*, p. 192.
The rest of the amount, totaling less than four lakhs of rupees, was paid by the end of March 1850, and a copy of "The Final Receipt for the purchase of Kashmir," signed by the members of the Board of Administration of Punjab, is on exhibition at the Punjab Record Office Museum in Lahore.⁵

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