

A Tale of Two States

by A.G. Noorani

From Autocracy to Integration: Political Developments in Hyderabad State (1938-1948) by Lucien D. Benichou; Orient Longman, pages 313; Rs.380.

Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-1948; Introduction by S.M. Burke; Oxford University Press; pages 242; Rs.395.

THERE is no greater American error than the belief that liberal institutions and the rule of law relieve a nation of the moral dilemma involved in the exercise of power. Power, like sex, may be concealed and outwardly ignored, and in our society it often is; but neither in the one case nor in the other does this concealment save us from the destruction of our innocence or from the confrontation with the dilemmas these necessities imply. When the ambivalence of one's virtue is recognised, the total inequity of one's opponent is also irreparably impaired" (Russia & the West's Mentor by George F. Kennan; 1961; page 372) (emphasis added throughout).

These words are no less true of democratic India and a Pakistan languishing under military rule however much they profess to disavow power politics and dress themselves up in the shining cloak of superior virtue. Half a century of their feud shows no sign of abating, amidst a series of accords in other trouble spots in the world. The animosity is obscene. Their self-images and perceptions of each other conflict sharply. The record reveals a bid on each side to do the other down from the very moment of their birth as independent states.

The Partition accord of June 3, 1947 took care of British India. But the princely states acquired a status that had no basis in law, morality or history — independence on the lapse of the paramountcy of the British Crown, as distinct from direct British rule over the rest of India. "In 1819 the States which now exist finally ceased to be independent," historian Edward Thompson wrote (*The Making of the Indian Princes*; OUP; 1943; page 285). They were a British creation. True to tradition the British supplied a neat legal myth to dress up the sordid reality. "The conquerors assiduously rebuilt their internal independence and gave back a great deal" (page 285); so long as they obeyed the British, Maharajas who did not toe their line were unceremoniously deposed. It is over these puppets — suddenly pitchforked to independent statehood on August 15, 1947, over a century after the extinction of all vestiges of sovereignty — that India and Pakistan went to battle, metaphorically and literally.

The issue which still continues to poison their relations is over one such entity — the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The merits of the dispute have been debated on both sides with a surfeit of legalism, morality and historical mythology. Viewed in the context of the times, together with Hyderabad, the spuriousness of those claims stands fully exposed. Each side contradicted itself largely on every single issue involved — the legal and moral

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worth of the ruler's signature on the Instrument of Accession; on the democratic principle, the people's right to decide on the accession; the communal factor; and considerations of geography. If Junagadh is also thrown into the reckoning, the contradictions emerge sharper still.

Together, these two books help to provide the corrective. Lucien Benichou, an Australian scholar, traces the political developments in Hyderabad from 1938 to 1948. Prof. Samuel Burke, an eminent scholar and diplomat from Pakistan, has contributed an informative Introduction to a collection of speeches by Mohammed Ali Jinnah from June 3, 1947, until his death in 1948.

The destinies of Kashmir and Hyderabad were linked at a precise moment in time, a fact which has gone unnoticed. The Maharaja of Kashmir signed the Instrument of Accession to India on October 26, 1947. That very day, the Nizam of Hyderabad was expected to sign the Standstill Agreement with India, but did not. It had been approved by his Executive Council by six votes to three, on October 25 after three days of debate. The draft Agreement and a draft collateral letter from the Nizam to the Governor-General of India, Lord Mountbatten, had been negotiated in New Delhi for days. Benichou records: "The documents were taken back to Hyderabad on 22 October with the undertaking by the delegation that they would be returned to Delhi, duly signed by the Nizam by 27 October. A strange incident in Hyderabad, however, was to upset all plans and seriously affect future negotiations between the State and India." The Nizam avoided signing them on October 25 and also on October 26. The next morning, the Ittehadul-Muslimeen's leader Qasim Razvi's goons surrounded the homes of members of the Hyderabad delegation and prevented them from leaving. They promptly resigned.

A new delegation arrived in New Delhi on October 30. Its plea for revisions was rightly refused. On November 29, the Nizam signed the documents. The Standstill Agreement was to last a year. It provided in Article 1: "Until new agreements in this behalf are made, all agreements and administrative arrangements as to matters of common concern, including External Affairs, Defence, and Communications, which were existing between the Crown and the Nizam immediately before the 15 August 1947, shall, in so far as may be appropriate, continue as between the Dominion of India (or any

part thereof) and the Nizam."

The accord contained the seeds of failure. The Nizam had forfeited New Delhi's trust completely. On both the issues which the siege of October 27 raises, Benichou's assessment is sound. It was not a Qasim Rizvi "coup" against the Nizam but an action taken with his connivance. The Nizam had consistently sought independence for the state and also perpetuation of his personal rule, flying in the face of the realities. "Faced with such bleak prospects, the Nizam had turned to Karachi (then capital of Pakistan) for advice. Although what passed between the emissaries of the Ittehad and Jinnah remained a well-kept secret, it can be supposed that Jinnah, waiting on the outcome of developments in Kashmir, welcomed the opportunity to render the life of Indian leaders a little more difficult. He may have advised Hyderabad 'not to give an inch' until at least the Kashmir issue had been settled."

V.P. Menon recorded that later the Nizam's emissary "Sir Sultan Ahmed told Lord Mountbatten and myself that the Nizam had sent two persons to Karachi who had returned on 29 October. He attributed the Nizam's volte-face to some message which he must have received from Karachi (*The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*; page 314). Mountbatten mentioned the names of the two emissaries — Yamin Zubeiri and a companion — to Jinnah when they met at Lahore on November 1, 1947. "Jinnah assured me categorically that he had merely seen these two men out of courtesy, for a matter of five or perhaps seven minutes" (Sardar Patel's correspondence 1945-50; Vol. 1; edited by Durga Das; Navajivan Publishing House; page 74). Circumstantial evidence and probabilities belie the denial. Two sets of documents are relevant. One set concerns Hyderabad; the other concerns Kashmir. Jinnah Papers July 26 — August 14, 1947; First Series, Vol. IV; Ed. G.Z.H. Zaidi (distributed by Oxford University Press), published recently, contains two revealing documents. One is the Nizam's note to Jinnah on July 28, 1947, defining his options. The other is a record of his delegation's talks with Jinnah in New Delhi on August 4. The Nizam astutely pointed out: "When the British go... there would be no chance of making anything like so favourable arrangement with the Government of the Dominion of India, as would be probable on the present basis, if a settlement could be reached now." He asked specific assurances of help "with arms

and equipment and, if necessary with troops".

On August 4, Jinnah evasively told the Nizam's emissaries: "It was not possible for him at present to give any specific undertakings but that, generally speaking, he was confident that he and Pakistan would come to the help of Hyderabad in every possible way". He read them a homily on the martyrdom "of Imam Hussain standing for what was right and giving his life for it" (pages 41-48 and 195-197, respectively). One who counselled thus on August 4 was unlikely to alter his stand on October 26-27, especially since Kashmir had acceded to India by then.

The Kashmir documents reveal that Mountbatten gave Jinnah this remarkable proposal at Lahore on November 1: "The Governments of India and Pakistan agree that, where the ruler of a State does not belong to the community to which the majority of his subjects belong, and where the State has not acceded to that Dominion whose majority community is the same as the State's, the question of whether the State should finally accede to one or the other of the Dominions should in all cases be decided by an impartial reference to the will of the people."

Mountbatten recorded his host's response in his Note of the discussion:

"Mr. Jinnah then went on to say that he could not accept a formula if it was so drafted as to include Hyderabad, since he pointed out that Hyderabad did not wish to accede to either Dominion and he could not be a party to coercing them to accession." Thus was the last chance for a Kashmir accord wrecked on the vain hopes of an independent Hyderabad. (ed. Durga Das, pages 73-74). Jawaharlal Nehru repeated this formula to Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in a cable on November 8: "... the principle that, where Ruler of a State does not belong to the community to which the majority of his subjects belong, and where the State has not acceded to that Dominion whose majority community is same as State's, the question whether the State has finally acceded to one or other Dominion should be ascertained by reference to the will of the people."

Mountbatten went so far as not only to offer a plebiscite in Kashmir under the supervision of the United Nations, but also that "a joint India-Pakistan force should hold the ring while the plebiscite is being held" (page 81). This, at a time when militarily India's position in Kashmir was

improving by the day.

Jinnah sinned against the light and repeatedly so as his statements on the princely states in Burke's volume bear out. Twice, on January 17 and July 30, 1947, he asserted the State's right to independence and their rulers' right to decide. The All India Congress Committee (AICC), in contrast, asserted on June 15 that "the people of the State must have a dominating voice" in the matter.

WHAT exactly was Jinnah's vision of Pakistan's relations with India? In an interview to A.S.R. Chari, then a correspondent of the Daily Worker organ of the British Communist Party on October 14, 1944, Jinnah said: "We will say 'Hands off India' to all outsiders", and would "vigorously observe something like the Monroe Doctrine".

On March 11, 1948, after Pakistan established, he told Dr. Eric Streiff of the Swiss paper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*: "I have no doubt in my mind that our own paramount interests demand that the Dominion of Pakistan and the Dominion of India should co-ordinate for the purpose of playing their part in international affairs and the developments that may take place and also it is of vital importance to Pakistan and India as independent sovereign states to collaborate in a friendly way jointly to defend their frontiers both on land and sea against any aggression. But this depends entirely on whether Pakistan and India can resolve their own differences. If we can put our house in order internally, then we may be able to play a very great part externally in all international affairs." It was, of course, impossible to achieve that while he pursued the policy on the States which he did.

In his famous speech to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, on August 11, 1947, Jinnah discarded the two-nation theory and ardently advocated a secular polity. His successors reversed that resolve. Given the historical background, the India-Pakistan Cold War could not fail to impact on secularism. It encouraged revivalist bigots in both countries.

In exploiting the Hyderabad question to promote the interest of Pakistan, Jinnah not only ruined Hyderabad but also damaged the interest of Pakistan as well. The tactical skill of Mohammed Ali Jinnah secured the establishment of Pakistan. The arrogant folly of the Quaid-e-Azam lost Kashmir for Pakistan and wreaked havoc for the poor Muslims of Hyderabad. No tears need be shed for the

Nizam.

A quarter century later, on November 27, 1972, the President of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, told a tribal jirga at Landikotal that India's first Home Minister and Minister for the States, Sardar Patel, had, at one stage, offered Kashmir to Pakistan in exchange for Junagadh and Hyderabad. But, he added, Pakistan "unfortunately" did not accept this offer with the result that it not only lost all the three native states but East Pakistan as well.

This is fully corroborated by the memoirs of Chaudhary Mohammed Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan* (page 299). Patel asked Liaquat Ali Khan:

"Why do you compare Junagadh with Kashmir? Talk of Hyderabad and Kashmir and we could reach an agreement." Patel repeated this offer publicly at a meeting in Junagadh on November 11, 1947. "Our reply was that one could agree to (sic.) Kashmir if they agreed to Hyderabad."

On November 27, with Lord Ismay's help, V.P. Menon and Mohammed Ali hammered out a draft agreement on Kashmir (Campbell-Johnson, page 250; Menon, page 389). Two hours after Mohammed Ali was airborne for Karachi, Nehru shot down the draft. So did Jinnah at his end. The Nehru-Liaquat talks in Lahore on December 8 ended in deadlock. Not surprisingly, Jinnah's notebook has an entry dated November 30 recording Liaquat's undertaking not to settle without his approval. On December 30, Jinnah got the Cabinet to pass a resolution on these lines, thus undermining Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan's position and the fundamentals of parliamentary democracy.

India's distrust of the Nizam was confirmed when he rejected the final draft of the "Heads of Agreement" sent to him on June 15, 1948, redrafted three times since May 26. It was the best offer in the circumstances. It did not provide for accession to India in law; but did so in effect on defence, foreign affairs and communications leaving Hyderabad considerable leeway. A draft-Firman by-the-Nizam, which bore V.P. Menon's imprint, provided for responsible government and for a plebiscite on the issue of accession to be held under the auspices of some impartial and independent body. It had Patel's full approval of course.

The tragic aftermath, predictable as it was, followed inexorably. "Operation Polo", launched on September 13, settled the issue, but at great human cost. P. Sundarayya recounted in his work *Telengana People's Struggle and its Lessons*, CPI(M), Calcutta, 1972; pages 188-189) the "widespread" attacks on Muslims in the wake of what was miscalled "police action".

On Maulana Azad's persuasion, Nehru sent to Hyderabad a Committee of Inquiry, comprising Pandit Sunderlal, Yunus Saleem and Abdul Ghafar. Its Report remains suppressed to this day.

To be continued

Courtesy of *Frontline*

reflection

In The Not So Cruel Month of May

by Andalib Rashdie

NOT Heaven itself upon the past has power/But what has been, and I have had my hour'. This is a quote from Dryden's Horace. John Dryden, poet playwright and translator died 200 years ago on May 1, 1700. When this 17th century poet lost his position of Poet Laureate after incurring royal displeasure, he lessened the frequency of writing poems, but provided some of the best translations of Horace, Homer, Virgil, Ovid and Boccaccio in English. With Poet Laureate, his position of Historiographer royal was also dissolved.

Romanian born poet Paul Celan chose to drown himself in the river Seine on May 1, 1970. A thoroughly disillusioned Paul lost his parents in the Hitler's Extermination Camp. Thomas MacDonagh, a poet of not so significance but a celebrated playwright at the Abbey alleged to be involved in the Easter Rising was executed on May 3, 1916.

Shakespeare was not probably the kind of poet for whom Plato shut the doors of his Ideal State. With all mundane thrust for beauty and economic interest Shakespeare bought the largest house available in Stratford-on-Avon on May 4, 1597 for 60 pound sterling. This house is known as the New Place. A spacious house like this

Hopkins burnt his poems on May 10, 1868 and termed the event to be the 'slaughter of innocents'. Sir Edmond Dyer, a poet turned diplomat noted for his love poem wrote: 'Seas have their source, and so have shallow springs/And love is love, in beggars and kings.' Gyer, withdrawn from the din and bustle of the worldly life preferred seclusion in later life. He was buried on May 11, 1667. Robert Browning met Alfred Lord Tennyson on May 12, 1846 and found him as 'a hazy kind of man, at least just after dinner'. The day also observes the birthdays of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828) and Edward Lear (1812).

needed the support of a big chunk of earth. So Shakespeare spent another 320 pound sterling for 107 acres of land near Stratford on May 1, 1602 five years after this purchase.

Belgian poet and novelist and Nobel Laureate Maurice Maeterlink died on May 5, 1949, while Henry David Thoreau passed away on May 6, 1862. Wordsworth wrote on this day in 1805 his famous lines 'She was a phantom of delight/When first she gleam'd upon my sight:/A lovely apparition, sent/To be moment's ornament:.... A perfect woman, nobly plann'd/To warm, to comfort and command:/And yet Spirit still and bright/With something of an angel-light' written on his wife from his heart Wordsworth depicts his lady of love and admiration. One of the best oriental births took place on May 6 with Rabindranath Tagore making the first scream on earth in 1861. May 7 marks the birthdays of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828) and Edward Lear (1812). Russian poet Osip Mandelstam was arrested to suffer inhuman torture on May 13, 1934. Dante Alighieri was born in Florence on May 14, 1265.

Emily Dickinson wrote no fewer than 1800 poems of which only seven

were published during her lifetime. She also withdrew herself from the outside world. Refused to leave her home for eleven years, she could be carried out only after death due to chronic nephritis on May 15, 1996. Thomas Moore, also a May born poet received from Byron his Memoirs as a trustee on May 17, 1824 and broke the deal by selling it to Murray for 2000 guineas. He took it back from Murray and instantly burnt Byron's manuscript. He borrowed heavily to pay Murray back with interest. On another occasion he had to flee to the Continent to escape the warrant of arrest for defaulted debt.

Persian poet, mathematician and astronomer Omar Khayyam was born on May 18, 1048 and poet George Meredith died on May 18, 1909. Khayyam's Rubaiyat conquered the west through translations of Edward Fitzgerald. Poet Laureate Sir John Betjeman died on May 19, 1948, and

Ogden Nash on the same day in 1971. John Betjeman had a lasting love affair with everything old belonging to Edwardian England. A good day indeed for Oscar Wilde, as he was released from Pentonville prison on May 19, 1896. Poet John Clare died in a Northampton General Asylum on May 20, 1864. On the same day in 1845 Robert Browning visited Elizabeth Barrett at her home and cooked up a plot of a successful elopement leading to a happy marriage during the following autumn. Whatever smart he was Christopher Smart could not escape a debt trap and was found dead in a debtor's prison on May 21, 1771.

May 22 observes death anniversaries of French poet, novelist and playwright Victor Hugo (1885), black American poet Langston Hughes (1967), and Irish poet Cecil Day Lewis (1972). Hugo was exiled by Napoleon III and later he became a French senator. Joseph Brodsky suffered five years in

Siberia and was expelled from Russia on May 24, 1972. Julian Grenfell who loved to compose war poems was killed in the warfront on May 26, 1915 during First World War. Spanish poet Juan Ramon Jumenez died on May 29, 1958.

May 30 records deaths both natural and unnatural. Christopher Marlowe was killed in a tavern brawl (1553). Alexander Pope (1744) and Boris Pasternak met natural (1960) death. The day also records in 1834 the birth of Poet Laureate Alfred Austin who had dismissed all works of Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Charles Swinburne, and William Wordsworth to be inferior to his. He claimed his position as a poet much above than his contemporaries although the posterity hardly recognized him to be a poet of eminence. On the last day of May Walt Whitman was born in 1819, St John Perse in 1887, and Judith Wright in 1915.

This brief write up does not explain the mystery of poetic birth and death. It is a simple chronicle of birth and death of poets drawn from Nicholas Albery's Poem for the Day. April was the cruellest of months (Star Literature, May 6 and 13, 2000). Although deaths were in plenty, with Marlowe killed in a tavern brawl May was not so cruel.