

# **TELANGANA AND THE REPUBLIC<sup>1</sup>**

**BY**

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## **Introduction**

The administrative and political structure of the country has been somewhat variable over history. Depending on when one takes as a starting point, empires and kingdoms have waxed and waned and we have lost sight of the “natural” boundaries of the nation and the states within its main borders. Nomenclature of the country and regions is another important aspect of trying to understand the history of the country.

## **Natural and Main Borders**

These main borders have been the three oceans to the West, South and East, the Himalayas on the north running west-east till they run out of height in the Far East of the country and the mountains in the North-West – the Hindu Kush. Incidentally the “Hindu Kush” – in Persian meaning “Hindu killer” – is the most tragic of our borders being so named because tens of thousands of Hindus captured by Muslim invaders were hauled over them, many dying on their way, to be sold in the slave markets of Central Asia.

This type of barbarism was confined to North and West India during the early period of Muslim invasions and raids. The Roma in Europe and elsewhere are considered to be the descendants of the Hindus that were enslaved and sold beyond the Hindu Kush. The Roma population of Europe is currently estimated at 12 million and are heavily discriminated against. An estimated 1.5 million Roma had been killed in the Holocaust launched by Hitler and the Nazis during the Second World War. There is also some affinity of the Roma and their language with our Telangana Lambada populations and their language. A study of this population by Indian historians seems indicated. They are our first NRIs – involuntary, no doubt.

The North West was once part of the Persian Empire – which is what brought Alexander up to the Indus in an attempt to establish his claim to the provinces of the now-defunct Persian Empire. The Mauryas regained much of that region and more

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besides and re-established the North West border of the country. They also exercised dominance over most of the country except the southern tip. This would be about the last time the whole of the country was united and at peace. It is little wonder that the Ashoka's lion capital and the Chakra were chosen as the symbols of the Republic.

The period of Muslim conquest and its attendant horrors is something most historians shy away from. We seem to be content to imagine that the Islamic period commenced with Babar and ended with Aurangzeb – even that period was not a happy and peaceful one. The pre-Mughal period was written up well by Muslim chroniclers of the period who are our only sources. It was indeed so horrible as to cause a natural aversion to deal with it and explain its causes and consequences. It takes a strong stomach to be able to deal with it dispassionately. This is another subject altogether.

Till the advent of Muslim invasion of the North West, that area – Vedic India - was very much part of the country. The Greeks referred to the country as 'Indika', derived from the river Sindhyu known to the Greeks as Indus. Of course, the older texts such as the Mahabharata and the Puranas used the name 'Bharata' to describe the country whose geographical borders were clearly known. The distances given then were found correct in the modern times.

The Arab chroniclers called it 'Al-Hind'. In Tarikh-Salatin-i- Afaghan, "Al-Hind is described as "the land of Hindustan, from Kandhahar to the sea to the south, and from Kambhayait to the sea of Bengal" (quoted in Diana L. Eck, "India : A sacred Geography", Harmony, 2012, p.93). Kandahar, now in Afghanistan, was the old Gandhara. In the Mahabharata, of course, Gandhari, the mother of Kuravas and consort of Dhritharashtra, was a Princess of that kingdom.

The later Muslim chroniclers transformed Al-Hind to 'Hindustan' and used it in continuously as did the East India Company and the British Raj. The Mughal emperors were titled *Badshah-i-Hind*. Victoria became *Kaiser-i-Hind*, though in Latin the title *Indiae Imperatrix* (Empress of India) was adopted. Her last successor abandoned his title of *Indiae Imperator* in 1947 and became a mere King of India (1947-50), till the Republic was proclaimed. In Pakistan, they still use the older term Hindustan to refer to their eastern neighbour and as does much of Northern India. And so did Savarkar.

The debates in the Constituent Assembly on this issue of nomenclature for the country are interesting. The adoption of 'Bharat' by the Republic was done in a roundabout way as though it were an afterthought – "India, that is Bharat". This was an issue, which the Assembly considered, and the debates were intense.

On 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1949, H. V. Kamath tabled an amendment to Article 1. It was that Article 1 should read " (1) Bharat or, in the English language, India, shall be a Union of States." or, alternatively, (2) Hind, or, in the English language, India, shall be a Union of States."

Speaking to his Amendment he said:

"The prominent suggestions have been Bharat, Hindustan, Hind and Bharatbhumi or Bharatvarsh and names of that kind. At this stage, it would be desirable and perhaps profitable also to go into the question as to what name is best suited to this occasion of the birth of the new baby - the Indian Republic. Some say, why name the baby at all? India will suffice. Well and good. If there was no need for a Namakaran ceremony we could have continued India, but if we grant this point that there must be a new name to this baby, then, of course, the question arises as to what name should be given.

Now, those who argue for Bharat or Bharatvarsh or Bharatbhumi, take their stand on the fact that this is the most ancient name of this land. Historians and philologists have delved deep into this matter of the name of this country, especially the origin of this name Bharat. All of them are not agreed as to the genesis of this name Bharat. Some ascribe it to the son of Dushyant and Shakuntala, who was also known as "Sarvadamana" or all-conqueror and who established his suzerainty and kingdom in this ancient land. After him, this land came to be known as Bharat. Another school of research scholars hold that Bharat dates back to Vedic....."

At this stage, he was interrupted by Ambedkar, who said: "Is it necessary to trace all this? I do not understand the purpose of it. It may be well interesting in some other place. My friend accepts the word "Bharat". The only thing is that he has got an alternative. I am very sorry but there ought to be some sense of proportion, in view of the limited time before the House....Why all this eloquence over it?" (<http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/lis/debates/vol9p38.htm>)

Kallur Subba Rao was even more insistent. He said: "I heartily support the name Bharat which is ancient. The name Bharat is in the Rig Veda (vide, Rig 3, 4, 23.4). It is said there, "Oh, Indra, all this progeny of Bharata...". Also in Vayu Purana the boundaries of Bharat are given (Vayupuran U45-75). It means that land that is to the south of the Himalayas and north of the Samundras (Southern ocean) is called Bharat. So the name Bharat is very ancient. The name India has come from Sindhu (the Indus river), and we can now call Pakistan as Hindustan because the Indus river is there. Sind has become Hind, as 'sa' in Sanskrit is pronounced as 'Ha' in Prakrit. Greeks pronounced Hind as Ind. Hereafter; it is good and proper that we should refer to India as Bharat. I would request Seth Govind Das and other Hindi friends to name the language also as "Bharati", I think for the name "Hindi" the name "Bharati" should be substituted, as the latter denotes the Goddess of Learning"(Ibid.).

Kamalapathi Tripathi (speaking in Hindi) also weighed into the debate. He said: "I would have been glad if the Drafting Committee had presented this amendment in a different form. If an expression other than "India, that is, Bharat" had been used, I think, Sir, that would have been more in accord with the prestige and the traditions of this country and indeed that would have done greater honour to this Constituent Assembly also. If the words, "that is" were necessary, it would have been more proper to use the words "Bharat, that is, India" in the resolution that has been

presented to us. My Friend, Mr. Kamath, has moved the amendment that the words. "Bharat as it is known in the English language, India" should be used.....We are pleased to see that this word has been used and we congratulate Dr. Ambedkar on it. It would have been very proper, if he had accepted the amendment moved by Shri Kamath, which states "Bharat as is known 'in English language 'India''. That would have preserved the prestige of this country. By the inclusion of the word 'Bharat' and by accepting it, we shall be able to give to this country a form and to give back to it its lost soul and we shall be able. to protect it also. Bharat will be a great nation and will be able to serve humanity on a world wide scale" (Ibid.)

Govind Das spoke as he felt that: "...naming of the country has been disturbed by the speeches so far delivered.. Naming has always been and is even today of great significance in our country. We always, try to give a name under auspicious stars and also try to give the most beautiful name. I am glad to find that we are giving the most ancient name to our country but, Dr. Ambedkar will excuse me, we are not giving it in as beautiful a way as it was necessary. "India, that is, Bharat" are not beautiful words for the name of a country. We should have put the words "Bharat known as India also in foreign countries". That would have been much more appropriate than the former expression. We should however, at least have the satisfaction that we are today, giving to our country the name of Bharat" (Ibid).

Clearly H V Kamath, Kamalapati Tripathi, Kallur Subba Rao and Govind Das were placing "Bharat" in the forefront and emphasizing that "India" was a late British Imperial usage. However, the vote on Amendment (1) was lost by 13 votes - Ayes: 38, Noes: 51 - on a very thin attendance at that. It would be interesting to find out who those 51 "noes" were.

Undeterred, H V Kamath returned to the fray on 14th November 1949, saying: "the Draft as passed by the House reads, "India, that is, Bharat". The revised draft presented to the House says, "India, that is Bharat, ". That I do not think it is what the House intended when we accepted Article 1. What was meant was, "India, that is to say Bharat". That is why two commas were inserted and the phrase was interposed. It does not mean, "India, that is Bharat." This is wrong English, so far as the meaning intended is concerned. I think the original was perfectly correct and it was absolutely wrong on the part of the Drafting Committee to change the wording". He then moved an amendment to the effect that "That in clause (1) of Article 1, after the words "that is" a comma be inserted and the comma after the word "Bharat" be deleted (<http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/debates/vol11p1.htm> ).

Not only were these amendments rejected and the Article 1 stands, as "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States" but, moreover, the Preamble states: "WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India as a ....". Maybe a Second Republic is needed to change this nomenclature.

'What is in a name, you may say? 'Well, a historian here may like to consider what the answer could be – for it was an important philosophical and political issue which none of the contenders acknowledged openly. Lewis Carroll ("Alice through the Looking Glass", Chapter 6) makes the point:

'It's a stupid name enough!' Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently. 'What does it mean?'

'MUST a name mean something?' Alice asked doubtfully.

'Of course it must,' Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: 'MY name means the shape I am -- and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.'

More astutely, Lewis Carroll makes the point:

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

Having set the overall context, it is time now to address the issue at hand.

### **Telangana in the Modern Period**

In the Deccan, the Kakatiya Kingdom (1083 to 1323 AD) encompassed the Telangana region. With its fall to Muslim invaders, Telangana was thrown into confusion and later became subject to successive Muslim kings for more than 600 years till the Republic of India was proclaimed. The specific identity of Telangana was then swamped in the larger Andhra Pradesh state till now.

Let me jump over a couple of centuries and come the modern period, which is of relevance to us today.

Telangana is an old nomenclature and we encounter it in the British papers of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. James Grant in his study, "Of the Northern Circars, from a Political Survey of the Deccan" ( dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 1794, submitted to the Commons Select Committee on the East India Company) says;

"The native inhabitants of these provinces, exclusive of a few thousand Mohamedans dispersed in the principal towns and among the more regular infantry and militia, are wholly Hindoos, and may, with great moderation be numbered at two million and half, under all denominations. They are parts of two nations of Telinga and Oria, Woria or Orissa formerly divided from each other by the Godavari" (Affairs of the East India Company, (Ed) Firminger, 1812, Volume 3, p.9).

This seems to indicate that the Northern Circars and especially those areas south of the Godavari were considered part of Telangana. He goes on to say:

"In the year 1512, the Kootubshahy, or Second Dynasty of Deccany Mussulman kings, dismembered, as turrefdars or governors, in right of power, the eastern division of the Bamineah Empire, called Telinga, but in after ages, more generally denominated, from its capital and principal fortress indiscriminately, the state of Hyderabad or Golconda.

What further regards the character, customs, manners and religion of these Deccanee Hindoos, is the subject of a more ample description, in another part

of the our Political Survey, which treats generally of all the six Indian nations inhabiting the Peninsula, giving their names to, or denominated from the grand divisions of the country, Malabar, Canara, Merhat (Maharat?), Telinga, Oria and Goudwannah, into which the Deccan is naturally and properly distributed." (ibid, p.10)

When the Kingdom of Golconda was conquered and annexed by Aurangzeb, Telangana became a part of a Mughal Province. Nizam ul-Mulk (the First) was appointed by the weak Mughal court to be its Subedhar of the Deccan. He assumed sovereign status and rights. After this, the territory became a patrimonial state of the Osmanshahi dynasty (in whose name the Osmania University was founded and still maintains). The seven Nizams ruled their ever-declining territory for 228 years till 1950.

The East India Company's territories consisted of the original three great Presidencies – Fort St. George (Madras), Fort William (Calcutta) and Bombay Castle (after the move from Surat). These became Provinces under the (British) Indian Empire in 1857. The other large acquisitions were the "North-West Province of Agra and Oudh" (later called the United Provinces), Punjab, and Sind, which was annexed by Bombay Province. Some isolated but strategic enclaves were under direct British control.

It is a little known fact that during the East Indian Company's expansion, the Company recruited some of its soldiers from "Telinga" by which name they were called. In the treaty with Mir Kasim, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1760, it was agreed that, "the Europeans and Telingas of the English Army shall be ready to assist the Nabob Meer Mahomed Cassim Khan Bahader (i.e., Mir Kasim) in the management of all affairs; and in all affairs dependent on him, they shall exert themselves to the utmost of their abilities." (Ibid, Volume 1, p. ix) .A footnote on the same page he clarifies: "Verelst: op.cit, p.157, Verelst defines a Telinga thus: 'A Sepoy, so called from the country of that name, from whence the first sepoys were probably enlisted.'

The Telangana soldiers seemed to have been shipped from Madras to Bengal and participated in the Battle of Plassey, after which the power of the Company was fully established in the Gangetic valley. This may be an area of interest to historians

By the proclamation of the Indian Empire in 1857, the rest of the country outside British control was ruled by the Princes who were sovereign rulers but under the suzerainty of the British Crown. In her Proclamation, the Queen Empress guaranteed the interests of the Princes' and the integrity of their states. Their treaties were exclusively with the Viceroy of India, who was Crown Representative of the (British) Empress or Emperor of India, and not with the Government of India represented by the Governor General. This as we shall see was a moot point in 1947, which was camouflaged by the fact that the Governor General was also by tradition the Crown Representative, the Viceroy. The Crown Representative's Department, however, was clearly not an office of the Government of India but an office under the Viceroy.

## **Status Quo Ante or Back to Basics**

When the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act of 1947, relinquishing control of the Indian Empire to the Dominions of India and Pakistan, it also released itself and the Princes of all treaty obligations between it and the Princes.

"The suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States lapses, and with it, all treaties and agreements in force at the date of the passing of this Act between His Majesty and the rulers of Indian States, all functions exercisable by His Majesty at that date with respect to Indian States, all obligations of His Majesty existing at that date towards Indian States or the rulers thereof, and all powers, rights, authority or jurisdiction exercisable by His Majesty at that date in or in relation to Indian States by treaty, grant, usage, sufferance or otherwise" (Indian Independence Act, 1947, 10 & 11 GEO. 6, CH. 30, Sec 7 (1) (b) ).

This was a unilateral termination of treaties by the British Crown and Parliament – done without consultation let alone agreement with the Princes concerned. "Perfidious Albion" ('Treachorous England' is a term coined by the French and Germans) is not an undeserved epithet. More betrayal was to follow from its successor in India - the Republic that seemed to learn all the bad habits of the British.

The Nizam had in the last decades of his rule converted "His Exalted Highness' Dominions" into "Hyderabad State" with representative government – limited no doubt – but representative nonetheless. The process of political change had been initiated under advice of Crown and in view of the general conditions in the Indian Empire created by the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935.

### ***Force Majeure***

The Nizam, who still retained supreme power, was alarmed at the change that was thrust on him by British withdrawal. It was a serious threat to his patrimonial rule but it could also hold out an opportunity – for independence. That story is told elsewhere. The invasion (as the 'Police Action' certainly was) of the State by the Indian Army took place in September 1948. This was in gross violation of the "Standstill Agreement" between the Government of Hyderabad and the Government of India in force at that time.

However, the Nizam continued to rule – *de jure* though not *de facto* - till 1950. While the Military Governor and, later, the Civil Governor exercised power subject to the Government of India, all *firmans* and orders continued to be issued in the name of the Nizam as Head of State. The Nizam had neither, unlike all the other Princes, signed an "Instrument of Accession" nor was he asked to after the takeover of his State. The case of Hyderabad State was still pending before the UN Security Council and despite the Nizam having withdrawn his application, the Council took the position that it was done under duress. This may have something to do with Government of India's attitude to Hyderabad from 1948 to 1956.

## New (and not so new) Status

I have dealt with the issue of Telangana – or at least, “why and why not Telangana” elsewhere:

In “The Historical Context of Andhra and Telangana, 1949-56” ( Special Article, Economic & Political Weekly, February 20, 2010, vol: xlv no 8) I have explored the problem in the context of the Congress Party and its need to defeat the Communist Party in both Andhra State and in the Telangana Region.

In “Reddys, Kammas and Telangana”, (Economic and Political Weekly, vol XLVI, no 36, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2011), I have tried to factor in the caste dimension in an attempt to explain the dynamic that forced merger and sustained the State of Andhra Pradesh till recently.

In “Andhra Formation and the Republic” I advanced the thesis that the Telangana merger and Hyderabad City was a quid pro quo for the Andhras giving up their claim to Madras. (<http://www.thehansindia.info/News/Article.asp?category=1&subCategory=5&ContentId=48569>).

And finally, in “The Telangana Tragedy -A Lesson in Integration and Disintegration”, (Journal of Indian School of Political Economy, Volume XXI, No 1-4, January-March, 2009, April-June 2009, July-September 2009, October-December 2009), I have described the forces that provided the balance between integration and disintegration of the State of Andhra Pradesh.

All these forces contrived, in my mind, to create the “Telangana Tragedy” – a tragedy that no one anticipated let alone wanted, but like a Greek tragedy was inevitable once the process was initiated and as vested interests seized the initiative and made the most of it. These are the “unintended consequences of public policy” made and implemented by politicians who could not see further than their nose or the next election. In the rest of this paper, I will try to address the issue in the context of the Republic of India and its compulsions.

First, the State of Hyderabad with the Nizam as Head of State continued to exist even after the 1948 annexation till 26th November 1949 when the Nizam adopted the Indian Constitution as the Constitution of Hyderabad – despite the fact that Hyderabad was not represented in the Constituent Assembly.

Sardar Patel announced at the concluding session of the Constituent Assembly on 26th November 1949 that: “I am glad to inform the House that all the nine States specified in Part B of the First Schedule of the Constitution, including the State of Hyderabad, have signified, in the manner indicated in my statement made on October 12th, their acceptance of the Constitution which the House is now going to adopt” (<http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/lis/debates/vol11p12.htm>).

Following the promulgation of the Constitution, the Nizam was made Rajpramukh of Hyderabad State and became responsible to the Government of India whose appointee he now was. He was also responsible to the democratically elected Government of Hyderabad after the First General Election of 1952. The period 1950-52 was somewhat a transition affair. The account of this period would throw light on the policy of the Governments of India and Hyderabad.

Second, more important point was Hyderabad's position under the new Constitution. It was classified as a Part B state. Part A states were the former British Indian provinces (Assam, Bihar, East Punjab, Bombay Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal). Part B States were the former Princely States (Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Bharat, Mysore, Patiala and East Punjab States Union, Rajasthan, Saurashtra, Travancore-Cochin). Part C states were the old Chief Commissioners' provinces and some Princely states (Ajmer-Mewara, Coorg, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh, Kutch, Manipur, Tripura and Vindhya Pradesh and Delhi). The group of Andaman and Nicobar Islands became the sole Part D state.

Dr Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, closed the Assembly thus:

"It must be said to the credit of the Princes and the people of the States no less than to the credit of the States Ministry under the wise and far-sighted guidance of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel that by the time we have been able to pass this Constitution, the States are now more or less in the same position as the Provinces and it has become possible to describe all of them including the Indian States and the Provinces as States in the Constitution. The announcement, which has been made just now by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, makes the position very clear, and now there is no difference between the States, as understood before, and the provinces in the New Constitution" (<http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/debates/vol11p12.htm>) (emphasis added).

Despite Rajendra Prasad's gloss, the whole thing looked very much like the structure of the Indian Empire but codified and cloaked in a Republican Constitution. Thus the Republic discriminated at its very birth between different regions of the country based on their political history. Why this happened and what its rationale was is something for close examination.

I can find nothing for clarification on this subject, except the following quotation from C. Rajagopalachari, Governor General of the Dominion of India and later Union Home Minister (26 December 1950 – 25 October 1951). Speaking in the Lok Sabha debates on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1951, as Home Minister Rajaji stated that:

"If I had my own way I believe that Parts A and B States should also be reduced to the size and quality of administration of Part C states in course of time. Then we shall be able to govern with a direct touch. The Governor or the Ministers, whatever name you call them by, will have a direct touch with the people in a much more familiar and intimate manner than we now have in the very large states" (emphasis added) (A.R.H.Copley, "The Political Career of C Rajagopalachari, 1937-1954", Macmillan, 1978, p.273)

Further on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1951 he said:

"I do not believe that smallness is necessarily bad. I do not believe that a small area is less competent to govern itself than a big area. On the contrary, our limited energies and limited talents may be better suited to smaller governments than for the government of larger areas" (Ibid)

The man was clearly far ahead of his times.

### **Confronting the Princely States Problem**

Now consider the situation. There was a Republic with clearly identified and administratively sanctified internal boundaries and sub-cultures belonging to Princely Indian states, which had been in existence for two hundred or more years. Residual India and its Pakistan twin were at war since their very birth. Moreover, India had two cases pending before the UN Security Council regarding two Princely states – Kashmir (S-654) and Hyderabad (S-986). Is that something that could be handled by an infant Republic and its politicians?

The Constitution makers – all clever lawyers and exhausted provincial politicians – perhaps did not understand the implications. They made some allowance for Kashmir in the Constitution but they acknowledged the identity of the Princely states in their Part B/Part C formula. The problem manifested itself politically in the General Election of 1952. Many former Princes and their kin were elected, with large majorities, by their former subjects (now citizens of the Republic). This indicated that old loyalties die hard and habits of centuries are not altered overnight by the ballot box. The political danger was clear and manifest to the professional politicians of the Congress Party.

The man who was wise enough and shrewd enough to grasp this could only have been Rajaji. Even Sardar Patel did not – he was a man of action for the immediate moment. He anyway would not have agreed to violate the treaties with which the Dominion of India was established. He had, moreover, given his word to the Princes and would not go back on it unlike his successors. But to anticipate a problem, which would only arise in the medium and long term, which was Rajaji's forte. As Home Minister (for the short while he occupied that office) he may have applied his extraordinary mind to this complex problem and devised a way forward. In my estimation, somewhere in the archives of the Home Ministry there would be a minute or paper by him on this issue. A budding historian may be able to find it and make a name for himself.

Setting up the States Reorganization Commission indicated that way forward. Whatever its recommendations; most of them were ignored. The Government used the opportunity created by the SRC to devise a political solution of its own to the Princely State problem.

It will be seen that the reorganisation left all the Part A states not only intact but also in many cases with expanded territory. Andhra broke off from Madras, even before the SRC, in 1953. It was given Part A status - reinforcing the point that it was not development that was the alleged basis for the Part A/Part B/Part C division. Andhra was bankrupt even before it was formed and everyone knew it. Only by its merger, would Telangana's surpluses save it from dire penury and provide the funds to develop its water and other resources. On the basis of financial viability, Orissa and Assam could also not be covered but they were Part A States only because of the direct British rule they had experienced.

It is a point usually forgotten that the Princely States gave up only three powers - defence, foreign policy and communications - to the Dominion of India. This was

clear and it was the basis of the Instruments of Accession. Also implied was the preservation of the identity of those States. When the Constitution was framed, the identity of the states was safeguarded in the Part B/Part C State formulation but the power that the Union government seized for itself in the Constitution was far in excess of those solemnly agreed to in the Instruments of Accession. The betrayal of treaty obligations towards the Princely states began with Jawaharlal Nehru - motivated by his drive to centralise the state and capture the 'commanding heights'.

Ambedkar was aware of the problem. On 29th August 1947 he stated to the Constituent Assembly:

"The House also will recall that the (Princely) States at the present moment have joined the Constituent Assembly on a basis of what is called the Instrument of Accession, which does not altogether tally with the subjects included in List No. 1. In fact, the subjects included in the Instrument of Accession fall considerably short of the subjects included in List No. 1. The question, therefore, that arises is this, whether a body of people, who are Members of the Constituent Assembly and who are bound by the Instrument of Accession and have responsibility for a shorter number of items, should be permitted to: take part in motions-and in debates relating to certain other subjects which were not included in the list contained in the Instrument of Accession"<http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/debates/vol5p10b.htm>

How then did the Constitution makers reconcile this essential dilemma of what they promised at Accession and what they enforced through the Constitution? The Sovereigns who signed the Instruments were the only ones legally able to rescind their rights. Did they play a role? Or was it the function of the "constituent assemblies" of the princely states created just for this purpose? In Hyderabad's case the sovereign, the Nizam, who never signed an Instrument of Accession, accepted the Constitution of India as the Constitution for his State without recourse to his Legislative Assembly, which had been dissolved in 1948 and not recalled. So here at least there was no promise; so none was broken. But the rest of the Princely States saw their Instruments of Accession converted to scraps of paper. This is another interesting subject for historians to examine in detail.

### The Solution

Anyway Hyderabad, despite Nehru's bleeding heart attitude towards it, was trifurcated. Telangana - now with Hyderabad's Part B status - was merged with Andhra (which was a Part A state). It was merged on the worst possible terms – a Gentleman's Agreement with persons who were no gentlemen. People from Princely States trusted the word of their natural leaders and assumed the same would hold for elected ones!

Bombay was left untouched and instead the Marathwada region of Hyderabad state, Vidarbha (territories of the former Raja of Nagpur) and Baroda were added to it. Also added to Bombay was the entire Saurashtra State (a Part B state), which was formed with great persuasion by Sardar Patel in 1948 with the 217 Princely States of

Kathiawar, including the former kingdom of Junagadh. Bombay State assumed monstrous size after 1956.

Travancore-Cochin, created in 1948, was merged with Malabar region of Madras. Mysore merged with Canara and Coorg and assorted parts of Hyderabad state and parts of Bombay state.

The Central Indian Agency's 34 Princely States had been consolidated into Vindhya Pradesh State in 1948. This was disrupted in 1950 and parts included in the United Province (renamed Uttar Pradesh) or Madhya Bharat (another 1948 creation). Later in 1956, its residual part was merged with the Central Province (renamed Madhya Pradesh).

The Malwa Union of Princely States was relabelled Madhya Bharat State in 1948 and included the Princely States of Gwalior and Indore. The entire state was merged in 1956 with Madhya Pradesh. Princely Bhopal, taken over by the Union Government when its Nawab fled to Pakistan, was also merged with Madhya Pradesh in 1956.

The Rajputana Agency consisting of 21 Princely States was renamed Rajasthan as early as 1949. In 1956, Ajmer-Mewar, a directly ruled British province, was merged with it. PEPSU – Patiala and East Punjab States Union (formed in 1948) - was merged with East Punjab State in 1956.

### **Relief - At last?**

After 1956, none of the Princely States of India were left with an identity. Only Jammu and Kashmir was an exception (which proved the rule) - that too because its case was before the UN Security Council. This, of course, did not stop Pakistan from annexing the Gilgit and Northern Territories of J&K into its illegal possession. Incidentally, as of 10<sup>th</sup> September 2001, "The Hyderabad Question" remains on the agenda of the Security Council – presumably at the request of Pakistan (Fifty-sixth session, Item 7 of the provisional agenda - Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations A/56/366). Some contend that this was the reason to dismember Hyderabad so as to wipe out its identity and confuse the issue before the Security Council. But if that is true, then that should have been done to J&K also – where there was a greater need and where it would have been more effective also for domestic reasons.

Now the Republic could rest easy. The peoples of the former Princely states were left to the tender mercies of former British subjects who had become fully empowered citizens of the Republic and its strongest political supporters. But what of those Princes who were promised that their identity of their states would be preserved? They and their kin were bought off by being made Rajpramukhs, Ambassadors, and directly recruited civil servants and Army officers. But in less than eight years by 1956, their age-old States would vanish from the face of the map.

## **Assessing the Damage**

This was Nehru's deed done after Sardar Patel's death – he seemed to want to undo what Patel achieved with so much effort and wisdom. As we saw, by 1952, Nehru did away with many of powers retained by the Princely States. Further and final elimination followed in less than 22 years of the signing of the Instruments of Accession, when what was left of the Princes' treaty rights was abrogated unilaterally and illegally. Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi administered the *coup de grace* to those treaty obligations when she abolished the Privy Purses and all the other obligations of the Government of India towards the Princes' - for narrow intra-party gains. The Supreme Court held the action illegal and *ultra vires* of Constitution but the Constitution was amended to give retrospective sanction. If this was the way the Republic conducted its public policy towards its domestic constituents, then its word was no longer worth much to any foreign power. The Republic that was born in deceit continued its downward descent till it became a farce in the Emergency declared by under Indira Gandhi – this time for her narrow self-interest.

In carrying out a motivated and calculated program of wiping out the identity and characteristics of the Princely states (perhaps to eliminate their political influence in the Republic), the result was to wipe out a large part of the history of the people and the land. Whatever may have been the attributes and roles of the princes- and not all of them were negative in their effect – they still represented Historical India. Many of the states consisted of multi-lingual and multi-religious populations; many of them were ruled by dynasties whose religion was different from their subjects. This experience would have been useful and worth emulating by the rest of the country.

The rulers of Udaipur and Travancore were only *dewans* or *pujaris* of the presiding deities of their main temple. Lord Eklaji (Shiva) was the ruling deity of Mewar-Udaipur and the Maharana ruled as his Dewan. Martanda Varma dedicated his kingdom of Travancore to the Lord Padmanabhaswamy (Vishnu) in 1750. He and his successor Maharajas, taking the title of Padmanabha Dasa, ruled as the servants of the deity.

The princes and their subjects played significant roles in the history of the country; they fought invaders, contested foreign rule, they protected and nourished the religion and traditions of their ancestors and people and maintained peace. Compared to today's rulers and their henchmen, they seem heroes worth cherishing. To reject and forget their roles is to reject and forget history.

## **What are States meant for- Preservation of Race, Religion and Language?**

States and Republics are seldom created by universal consent. They are usually born in blood and tears. Politicians in order to establish their power manufacture what consent they could by playing on deep-rooted emotions of the people.

Prince Bismarck had his job cut out unifying the diverse German princely states. He waged three wars to do so – against Denmark, Austria-Hungary and France. But as he consolidated the German Empire under Prussian domination, even he could not and would not touch the internal borders and identity of the German principalities. The idea of reuniting the German people was emotive and formed the basis of the new German Empire – the Second Reich. But it neglected to include Austria and the

German population of Bohemia. It would result eventually in disaster through the racial policies of Hitler and his Third Reich, the annexation of the German populated lands in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland and pave the way to World War II and the Holocaust. Post war Europe saw the forced migration of ten million Germans from the lands of their birth to the now divided two Germanies

In India somewhat of the same took place. The slogan of religious unity, which disrupted the greater Indian state created by the British, resulted in Partition. The cruel death of a million Hindus and Muslims and the forced migration of another 12 million Hindus and Muslims from their homes to strange lands is a tragedy of mammoth proportions. The same religious basis for statehood was shown to be false in 1971 in Pakistan with the revolution in Bangladesh –which brought language and race to the forefront. Notwithstanding a certain religious unity the continued sectarian massacres in residual Pakistan today illustrate the hopelessness of using Islam as a unifying factor for a nation-state. Like the French Bourbon dynasty, the Pakistanis “have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing”.

Interestingly Pakistan too followed in India’s bad example regarding the treatment of their Princely states and autonomous provinces. In Pakistan, where autonomy and democracy were sorely needed to maintain that shaky state - it was abandoned. The results were catastrophic. Pakistan came apart in 25 years of its creation and continues to unravel. Pakistan continues to play the same political game that got it into so much trouble, as it is unable to abandon the founding myth of their state – Islam as the basis for statehood.

The slogan of linguistic unity - used to dismember the Princely States - was never applied across the country. The linguistic basis of the states – potentially dangerous to the unity of the nation - is now thrown into the rubbish bin of history. It has served its narrow political purpose.

All these slogans – racial, religious and linguistic unity - that form the basis of state formation are now seen to be hollow or dangerous and meanwhile better objectives have come to the fore.

### To Conclude

As we have seen, after the collapse of the Kakatiya Kingdom in about 1323 AD, Telangana lost its particular political identity. With its fall to Muslim invaders, Telangana was thrown into confusion and later became subject to successive Muslim kings for more than 600 years till the Republic of India was proclaimed.

Even in the brief period 1950-52, it was part of the multi-linguistic State of Hyderabad though Telangana and its people were the dominant majority in it. The specific identity of Telangana was merged and swamped in the even larger state of Andhra Pradesh – which even with linguistic unity did not serve to protect and enhance the interests of the people of Telangana. The transformation of the Telangana identity into a political entity is still to be achieved, though we seem to be on the threshold of achieving that long desired status.

The question remains - which is not at all premature – is to what this long desired status going to be used for? Is it only a device to achieve narrow ends? Or is there

are larger goals aimed at the prosperity and comfort of its entire people? If so, what should be these goals?

### **Setting of Goals**

Today the demand is for administrative efficiency and probity and political convenience of the aspiring and demanding masses. The state must exist for the benefit of its entire people. It must be a national home – safe, secure and comfortable for all its citizens to live in. It cannot be dedicated to esoteric ideas, which do not feed the belly nor educate children nor safeguard the health of the people and the environment. It must be fair and equitable to every one of its citizens.

To achieve this we need both a political class and an administrative system that clearly set these goals and which make the efforts needed to achieve them. It is imperative that the politicians as well as the bureaucracy should have shared values. But, and it is an important but, neither the shared values nor the capacity to implement them is an easy task to achieve. Frankly, this takes much time and effort but the understanding and the will to do so seem to have been in short supply. Dedicated political personnel and administrators with trained minds are not just there for the asking.

It is not enough to go on about Centre-State issues. There is so much even a State can do, which is not being done. What is required above all is an application of mind and effort to solve problems that are simple and important to people - law and order, clean water, safe roads, good schools and caring hospitals. To do this generally across the country, states will have to be small and manageable, as Rajaji had envisaged.

If Telangana can, in this manner, show the way forward - then it will be an example to the rest of the country. This is what Telangana State should be – to be different. Just to be like other states would not be worthy of the long drawn Telangana struggle and the great sacrifice of human lives that has been made in its name. Otherwise, simply achieving a new state might mean nothing particularly worthwhile in terms of policies for the benefit of the people of Telangana.