CHAPTER V

PRINCES AND THE WAR PERIOD: 1939-1944

The present chapter deals with the role of the princes during the Second World War and their relations with the British. A brief background of the relations is examined with. In short, the policy of the Imperial Government regarding military establishments in the Princely States throughout the period under study was twofold— to keep a strict control over the armies and arms of the States; and to utilize the services of selected troops of the selected States for the British cause. In regard to the first, it has been explained at length that the British authorities kept themselves fully and regularly informed about the number and nature of troops and arms maintained by the States, including the East Punjab States. The States were not allowed to import or manufacture arms and they had to depend, exclusively and entirely, on the British Government for the supply of arms. Their requisitions for arms were considered on the merits of each case, and their demands in this respect could be rejected by the Supreme Government, as indeed was done in the case of the Punjab States more than once. In fact, the British policy makers did not allow the rulers of the States to keep more forces and arms than were considered essential for the internal security of their States; for unrestricted military establishments, it was apprehended, might pose a danger to the security of the British Empire in India.

In pursuance of the second aspect of their policy, the British authorities organized the selected troops of a number of States, called the 'Imperial Service Troops' who were given necessary training at the cost of the States concerned so as to render them fit for active service, along with the Indian Army, in times of emergency. Only the States like Kapurthala,
Patiala, Jind, Baroda and others whose loyalty and devotion was considered to be undoubted and whose rulers had offered the services of their troops repeatedly for the cause of the Paramount Power, were associated with the scheme. And the selected trained troops of these States, rendered valuable services to the British in the North-West Frontier campaigns (1897) and in the course of the First World War. Despite all this, the British authorities were not really unanimous in their opinion regarding the usefulness and trustworthiness of the Imperial Service Troops, and some notable among them looked askance at the scheme.¹ Sir A.P. MacDonnell, Lieutenant-Governor of North-West Provinces and Awadh, for example, was "no supporter of the policy which led to the creation of the Imperial Service Troops" and regarded it as a 'mistake';² likewise, Sir William Lockhart, the Commander-in-Chief, considered the whole experiment "not merely as nonsensical, but even as dangerous, and would like to abolish the entire Imperial Service Contingents by a stroke of pen.³ Although the diverse opinion prevailed and the scheme of Imperial Service Troops was allowed to be continued, yet the British authorities deliberately kept the scheme confined to no more than 23 States,⁴ embracing in all 19,000 men of the Imperial Service Troops. It was due to the fact that the British high-ups viewed with suspicion and distrust the growing strength of the movement. After the First World War, a change was discernible in the British policy in respect

² MacDonnell to Curzon, 29 Sept. 1899, Microfilms, Curzon Papers, Reel 8, No. 109 (NAI).
³ Curzon to Hamilton, 11 Jan. 1900, Microfilms, Curzon Papers, Reel 2, No.2 (NAI).
⁴ Prominent among them were as Gujrat, Kathiawar, Rampur, Patiala, Kapurthala, Orissa and Chattisgarh states, Hyderabad, Broda, Navanagar, etc.
of the States' troops. The scheme of the 'Imperial Service Troops' was replaced by what was designated 'Indian States Forces' scheme. According to the new scheme the troops of the States were divided into three categories; the initial supply of arms and equipment for Class A and Class B troops was to be made free of charge by the British Government, and even for Class C troops suitable rifle weapons were to be supplied according to the requirements of the States concerned. Thus a policy of 'complete trust' was advocated and adopted in respect of the States' forces. This change in the British policy was effected due to two reasons: first, the British authorities had been greatly impressed by the undoubted loyalty evinced and valuable services rendered by the Indian Princes during the Great War; secondly, and more importantly, the British imperialists badly needed the support of these Chiefs in order to check the growth of militant nationalism in the country. Nevertheless, it will be a mistake to suppose that the British authorities had started reposing full faith and trust in the Princes so as to allow them free hand in the organization of the troops. The actual state of affairs was to the contrary. Even under the new scheme of Indian States Forces, any increase in the armed forces of the States or their arms was controlled and regulated by the Supreme Government; invariably the British authorities would ensure that the cost of maintenance of the troops remained within the financial resources of the States and that the number of troops was commensurate with their internal security requirements after the deduction of those reserved for Imperial defense. It is pertinent to mention in this regard that both the Government of India and the Home Government were opposed,

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5 It is significant to observe in this connection that the Maharaja of Kapurthala had given 'wholehearted cooperation' to the British authorities in suppressing the Ghadar movement of 1915 and the Punjab disorders of 1919, and subsequently he rendered valuable assistance in curbing Babbar Akalis. See Foreign Department, File No. 94 (i)-I, 1926, p. 5.
as a matter of policy, to the supply of artillery to the Princely States. As a matter of fact, the shrewd British imperialists followed a very clever and cautious policy regarding military establishments in the States: on the one hand, they kept up the loyalty of the Princes and utilized their selected troops in the times of emergency, thereby mitigating the financial burden on the maintenance of Indian Army; on the other, they prevented the States from increasing their troops and arms which might pose a danger at any time to the security of the British Indian Empire.

The Period from 1939-46 was very critical but significant for the profound and important changes particularly in the political, administrative and constitutional life of the country that took place in the native States. These changes began with an effort to bring or group together smaller States administratively, especially in respect of police and judiciary. The outbreak of the Second World War in September, 1939, did encourage this tendency. It ultimately culminated in the amalgamation of smaller *jagirs* in Gujarat and Kathiawar agencies. It took place under the Attachment Act of 1944, thereby almost wiping them out.

**Genesis of Co-Operative Grouping:** During the years 1933-39, the Indian Government realized that, even in the event of the formation of a federation of both the India’s, integration of smaller states was essential and schemes for the amalgamation of smaller States of Kathiawar and Central India were made. However, it was long before these schemes could be implemented. The Initial step in this direction was, however, taken under the co-operative grouping scheme. Under this the smaller States were bought together for some administrative and judicial matters.

The immediate provocation for the move of grouping smaller States on a co-operative basis appears to have the murder of Major
Bazalgette, the Political Agent at Rampur. This incident indicated that popular discontent in the smaller States might take a violent turn. And also this demonstrated the inadequacy and inefficiency of the police force to deal with such an eventuality. The Political Department, moreover, realized that, in the face of the rule of Congress Governments in the neighboring Provinces which “were reluctant to render any assistance to the States.” It became essential to consider some scheme under which the States should share the cost of maintenance of joint reserve force. Besides, most of these States did not have, nor could they afford, an efficient and regular judiciary; the British Government realized that, to start with, the co-operative grouping of States could be experimented within these two spheres which had crucial significance in the administration of the States.

In view of these considerations, in his inaugural address at the Chamber’ session on March 13, 1939, the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow emphasized the need for smaller States with limited resources to take steps for organizing joint administrative services with their neighbors. In his reply, the Chancellor, while affirming the need for co-operative grouping, maintained that it should be a voluntary effort and that the sovereignty of the states should in no way be impaired. He also suggested that such co-operation should not be limited to geographical boundaries of a group. However, in order to understand the implications of such a

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6 Foreign and political Department (hereinafter referred to as FPD) No. 14 (30), Internal A, 1940, 30.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Proceedings of the Meetings of the Chamber of Princes, March 1939 (hereafter referred to as Progs. Co. of P.) (Delhi, Government of India Press, 1939) var. 17.
10 Ibid., 68; Ibid.
scheme thoroughly, the Chamber appointed a Committee of Ministers which submitted its report in August 1939 on the issue.\textsuperscript{11}

Simultaneously, political officers of various agencies invited the States concerned to express their opinions on the question. The States of most of the agencies were averse and hostile to the suggestion. To start with, in Central India, where bigger States were not invited to discuss the issue, no decision was taken at by smaller States. The Gujarat States doubted the feasibility and desirability of the scheme. They declared that they had already been co-operating with each other on a voluntary basis whenever such co-operation was considered essential.\textsuperscript{12}

**Eastern States Agency and Co-operative Grouping:** The issue, however, reached a climax in the Eastern States Agency. The rulers of Orissa and Chhattisgarh states realized that the scheme presented to them by the Resident was an encroachment on their sovereignty, so they expressed their inability to accept it. The Resident tried to convince them that the proposed Joint Police Force was their “own Force being maintained by them for their own security.”\textsuperscript{13} But the rulers were firm in their stand. The Resident ultimately advised\textsuperscript{14} them in the name of Crown Representatives under clause 6 of the *sanads* to accept the scheme. As a result of this appeal they agreed to and an Eastern States Joint Force came into effect on August 1, 1939.\textsuperscript{15}

**Outbreak of Second World War:** At this juncture, with the outbreak of the Second World War, the Joint Police Force scheme in the states

\textsuperscript{11} Punjab Achieves, Patiala Chamber Section (hereafter referred to as PA.CH.V. (d) 436 of 1943.

\textsuperscript{12} PA CH. III (d) 18 of 1943, 253; *Ibid.*

\textsuperscript{13} FPD No. 14 (30), Internal A, 1940; *Ibid.*

\textsuperscript{14} FPD No. 14 (8), Internal A, Secret, 1939.

\textsuperscript{15} “You shall act in accordance with such advice as may be given to you by the Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern States or such other political Officer as may be vested with authority on behalf of the Viceroy.” PA. CH. III (d) 18 of 1943; FPD No. 14 (79), Internal A, 1940, 8.
became a pressing need, for it was evident that, in the event of any kind of disturbances taking place in these States, the Crown Police Force could not always be in a position to deploy personnel to quell them. The British Government also hoped that, through Co-operative Grouping Scheme, the introduction of administrative reforms in the States might be facilitated and the people of the States might have some measure of satisfaction on this account. Consequently, when the rulers of Eastern States Agency, as a protest to this Police Force, approached the Viceroy to reconsider the decision, no heed was paid to these representations.

Under these circumstances, anticipating further moves in this direction, the rulers themselves took initiative to work out arrangements for joint administration in different spheres like Public Health, Medical Service, Education, Development, and Veterinary. They appointed Sir M.N. Mukherjee, retired Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court and an ex-Law Member of Governor-General’s Council, to draw up a scheme for an efficient High Court for the States. Hence, when the political Agent forwarded a Joint High Court scheme for Chhattisgarh States, the latter replied that they had already deputed Sir M.N. Mukherjee to draw up a scheme for them and that they could not accept the Political Agent’s scheme unless they had examined Mukherjee’s scheme.

**Chamber of Princes and Co-Operative Grouping:** These developments in the Eastern States Agency had an all-India bearing so far as the smaller States were concerned and the Chancellor asked for certain clarifications regarding the issue from the political Department. In the negotiations which followed, the Political Department made it very clear that co-operative grouping of smaller States was the only alternative to

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16 Ibid.
17 PA. CH. III (d) 18 of 1943.
18 Appendix VIII.
absorption in a larger unit.”¹⁹ The Political Department agreed, however, to consult, in future, the Chancellor regarding all the schemes of co-operative grouping and to send for his perusal summaries of such schemes.²⁰ The Political Secretary further assured the Chancellor in his letter dated February 3, 1941, that the Viceroy would always be prepared to consider any “reasonable suggestions which the States concerned may wish to make towards the solution of administrative and other difficulties.”²¹

**Appointment of Zorawar Committee and its Recommendations:** Soon after this, the Chamber appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Col. Zorawar Singh to advise the Chamber on the issue. The recommendations of the Committee²² were incorporated in a resolution adopted by the Chamber in its session of 1942. They were: that these schemes would be voluntary; that, till the scope of co-operative grouping was defined, it should be confined to police and judiciary only; that administrative convenience and not physical contiguity alone should be the decisive factor in this matter; that a State with effective administrative convenience and not physical contiguity alone would be the decisive factor not to be obliged to join any such scheme simply because the other states adjoining it could not maintain or pay for an effective scheme of co-operative grouping and that, if the rulers of any particular region wanted to experiment with some scheme which had already been adopted in some region, they should be permitted to give it a fair trial.²³

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¹⁹ FPD No. 34(3), Political Secret, 1940.
²⁰ Ibid.
²¹ Ibid.
²² The Committee comprised Col. Zorawar Singh (Panna), Khan Bahadur Syed Bunyad Hussain, K.C. Neogi, (Mayurbhanj), Maharaja Shri Virbhadraj Singh (Dungarpur), P.S> Deshmukh (Jaora Jr.), Trikkayal Nrupendra Narayan Singh Deo (Seraikella). PA. CH. II (b) 45 of 192; Ibid.
Co-operative Grouping in Central India: Co-operative grouping, however, appeared to have been accepted voluntarily only in Central Indian; there its enthusiastic exponents not only supported it but also put forward their own schemes. By the end of 1942, two schemes were in progress in Bundel Khand Agency.24 The Western Co-operative Group, consisting of 20 salute and non-salute States, headed by the ruler of Orchcha, started functioning with the appointment of a common police adviser and a common high court judge.25 Another Eastern Bundel Khand Co-operative Grouping Scheme comprising the rulers of Panna, Ajaigadh, Nagod and Sarila was approved by the Viceroy as “an experimental measure” with certain restrictions,26 but the implementation of this scheme was postponed in the hope that its merger with the Orchcha group might be possible.27

Co-operative Grouping in Other Regions: Unlike the Central India Agency, the Punjab Hill States were also forced to accept, under the advice clause, the joint co-operative grouping in judiciary and police28 very much similar to the Eastern States Agency scheme. Joint High Courts had started functioning in Orissa and Chhattisgarh States, too.29 In Kolhapur and the Deccan States Agency, Sangli, after initial opposition, agreed to a joint police force to serve all the Deccan States. This force started functioning in 1940.30 Co-operative grouping for judiciary and police were attempted in the case of many other states. In the case of certain Punjab States like Malerkotla, Pataudi and Chamba, not only was

24 FPD No. 26 938), Political Secret, 1940.
25 FPD No. 174, Political Secret, 1941.
26 FPD NO. 27, Political Secret, 1941; FPD No. 253, Political Secret, 1943.
27 Ibid.
28 FPD No. 14 (14), Internal A (Confidential), 1941; Ibid.
29 FPD NO. 92, Political Secret, 1943; FPD No. 373, Political Secret, 1941.
30 FPD No. 14 (14), Internal A (Confidential), 1941.
co-operative grouping encouraged and promoted\textsuperscript{31} but arrangements were also made to affiliate them to the Punjab for the supervision of their Police Department.\textsuperscript{32} Co-operative grouping amongst the States was also attempted in many other administrative matters through the appointment of a joint conservator of forests, joint auditor and joint revenue commissioner.\textsuperscript{33}

The Co-operative grouping in smaller States during 1939-42 made it clear that the majority of the smaller States accepted it with resentment and maintained throughout that, instead of being voluntary, the scheme was mandatory. However, there was no doubt that it helped the smaller States to improve partially their administration without any interference in their autonomy and held out the promise of a sort of nucleus for a federation of smaller States with a centralized administration.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{India in the War:} While the co-operative grouping scheme pertained to a small section of the States, the country as a whole was to witness efforts for constitutional reforms of an important nature. The fall of Burma and Singapore in early 1942 brought the Axis Powers to the borders of India and the British Government began to think of measures to enlist the cooperation of different political parties in British India which had so far rejected the British Government’s call for support in the war.\textsuperscript{35} The Princes, however, had already expressed their wholehearted support for the war and had contributed considerably in men, money and material.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{31} FPD No. 231, Political Secret, 1942; FPD No. 167, Political Secret, 1942.
\textsuperscript{32} FPD No. 231, Political Secret, 1942.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid}; FPD No. 263, Political Secret, 1942.
\textsuperscript{34} FPD No. 263, Political Secret, 1942.
\textsuperscript{35} Menon, V.P. \textit{The Story of the Integration of Indian States} (Calcutta, Orient Longmans, 1956) 46; Linlithgow, M., \textit{Speeches and Statements 1936-43} (Delhi, Bureau of Public Information, 1945) 199-211.
\textsuperscript{36} Progs. C. of P. 1940, n. 4, 11. Besides this, the Princes were having informal discussions with the heads of supply, Defense, and Industry Departments and also participated in National Defense Council, Progs. C. of P. 1942, n. 4, 39.
The people of the States were not wholly with the Prices in their stand, for they agreed with the Congress that “if they (Princes) must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad…their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own States in which undiluted autocracy reigns supreme.”

It was against this background that Mr. Churchill, on March 11, 1942, announced the decision of the War Cabinet to send Sir Stafford Cripps, then Lord Privy Seal, with proposals for India’s attainment of self-government after the war, Sir Stafford was also to propose an interim arrangement which would secure co-operation of India as well as native states of India in the war.

**Cripps Offer:** A week after his arrival in India, Sir Stafford announced his proposals at a Press Conference on March 29, 1942. The Draft Declaration consisted of two parts- a long-term offer, and a short-term offer. The long-term offer was that, immediately after the cessation of hostilities, “steps shall be taken to set up in India… an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution” with dominion status. This Constitution would be framed subject only to two conditions, namely, that a Province or Provinces had the option to secede from such Union, and secondly, that a treaty would be signed between His Majesty’s Government and the Constitution-making body to cover “all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands.”

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38 The Indian National Congress Committee and the Working Committee during the period between March 1939 to January 1940.
39 However, a copy of Draft Declaration was already being supplied to the Princes and political parties in India. Coupland, R., *The Cripps Mission* (Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1942) 29.
Under the short-term offer, it was maintained that, until the new Constitution was prepared; all political parties must give their active and effective co-operation in the Councils of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations for the defense of Indian and also India as well as the prosecution of the world war effort as a whole.42

**States and the Cripps Proposals:** The Indian States were not mentioned in the short-term offer because they had been already co-operating with the British Government. In the long-range plan, however, the Draft Declaration announced that provision would be made for the participation of Indian States in the Constitution-making body.43 It further declared that “whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements, so far as it may be required in the new situations.”44

Thus the rulers, though not affected immediately by the Cripps’ proposals, were very much concerned with its long-term proposition and, therefore, sought clarifications regarding their position in the long-term plan. For this purpose, a Princes’ delegation45 met Sir Stafford on April 2, 1942, in the course of which the Chancellor, the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, maintained that, although the States would like to co-operate and participate in a United States of India, provision was necessary for “the non-adhering States or group of States” to “have the right to form and negotiate for a Union of their own with full sovereign status in accordance with a suitable and agreed procedure specially devised for the

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42 Ibid., 29.
43 Ibid., 28.
44 Ibid., 29.
45 This delegation consisted of the Chancellor (the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar), the pro-Chancellor (the Maharaja of Bikaner) and the Maharaja of Patiala. The Nawab of Chhattari represented the Nizam. FPD No. 192, Political Secret, 1942, 20.
Sir Stafford promised the Chancellor that he would urge it on behalf of the Princes before His Majesty’s Government.47

Sir Stafford Cripps in this context dealt with the question of Paramountcy and said that while, in the case of States adhering to the Union, Paramountcy would be “automatically dissolved,”48 with regard to non-adhering States, the Crown would retain the means to implement its obligation those would be changed on the questions of Paramountcy and other related matters except with their consent.49

Sir Stafford suggested the extension of joint co-operative grouping scheme to wider units so that, in the event of their not being one Union, the “inconveniences” caused by the multiplicity of them would be lessened.50 Answering the question of the revision of treaties, the Lord Privy Seal assured the Princes that the contemplated revision would go only to the extent it might be required in the “new situation”51 and that no blanket revision was contemplated in this respect.

Finally, Sir Stafford advised the Princes to establish contacts with political parties of British India so that a final decision on the future constitutional changes might be facilitated.52

The proceedings of this meeting were of great importance because they touched many issues having vital repercussions on the States in future. To start with, for the first time, the idea of a Union of States with

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46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., However, in consultation with the Reforms Commissioner, Mr. H.V. Hodson, and later Mr. V.P. Menon, the Viceroy wrote in a letter in a letter to the secretary of State that a Union of State was not “just practical politics and that it was not worth wasting time considering it.” He was “emphatic that it would be disingenuous to encourage the States to go on thinking along these lines.” V.P. Menon, n. 41.
48 FPD No. 192, Political Secret, 1942.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 25.
51 Ibid., 20-22.
52 Ibid., 20.
full sovereign status was mooted. Secondly, the statement of Sir Stafford Cripps, for the first time, made it vivid that, in the case of acceding States, Paramountcy would lapse. Thus the idea of the lapse of Paramountcy which raised so much controversy during 1946-47 appeared to have mentioned for the first time by Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942. This apart, Sir Stafford Cripps clearly explained to the Princes that the acceding States would have to delegate some of their rights to the Union and at the same time also warned them of the disadvantages of non-acceding. The point was well elucidated in the correspondence of Hyderabad with His Majesty’ Government. In its letter dated December 20, 1942, Hyderabad expressed its desire to be a separate unit having no organic connection with the Indian Union and having direct treaty relations with the British Government. In reply, the Foreign and Political Department appreciated the “soundness of the argument,” but at the same time doubted its practicability because a non-acceding State, surrounded as it would be by the territories fully self-governed, could never have friendly relations with the Union. What was more, as there would be British forces to protect the States, a skirmish between the British forces and the Indian Union troops on any minor point might create considerable confusion. Besides, as regards matters of common interest with the rest of the Union, the treaty relations between the States and the Paramount Power were to be replaced by the agreement between the Union and non-acceding States. The Crown would be nowhere in the picture and a non-adhering State could hardly expect a liberal treatment from the Union. Sir Stafford made it clear to them that the States should look to the Indian Government and not to the British Government for their future.

53 FPD No. 376, Political Secret, 1942.
54 Ibid.
Failure of the Cripps Proposals: The Cripps proposals were rejected by the Political parties in British India.\textsuperscript{55} The Congress, apart from other points such as defense etc.,\textsuperscript{56} rejected it on the plea that, first, 90 million of States’ people had no representation in Cripps proposals,\textsuperscript{57} and secondly, the principle of non-accession might lead to the Balkanization of India in many States\textsuperscript{58} and, therefore, was a “severe blow to the conception of Indian unity.”\textsuperscript{59}

The Princes did not seem to have favored it either. Some of their proposals indeed created anxiety and suspicion in the Princes’ minds regarding the future policy of the British Government towards them. In a letter dated June 15, 1942, the Chancellor complained that Sir Stafford Cripps, in his discussions on defense matters, had ignored the States completely. Secondly, “various important references made in connection

\textsuperscript{55} Despite its rejection, some of the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps with regard to the States found favour with some of the liberal leaders in India and, in a slightly modified form, found expression in a report prepared by Sir T.B. Sapru in 1945, on constitutional proposals, of the Sapru Committee (Bombay, Padama Publication, 1945) 198-214.

\textsuperscript{56} The Congress maintained that the Cabinet proposals, relating as they were to the future, were such as would “imperil the development of a free and united national government.” It objected to the British Government’s retention of Defense in its control and commented that, in the war emergency, national defense could be effectively provided only if India had full freedom. “To take away Defense,” said the resolution, “from the spree of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and nullity, and to make it perfectly clear that Indian is not going to be free I any way… during… the war.” Gwyer, M., nd Appadoria, A., ed., \textit{Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution} 1921-47, Vol. II (London, Oxford University Press, 1957) 524-6.

\textsuperscript{57} In its resolution dated April 2, 1942, the Working Committee states thus: “The complete ignoring of ninety millions of people in the Indian States, and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their rulers, is a negation both of democracy and self-determination.” \textit{Ibid.}, 525.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.} In a statement dated April 13, 1942, Gandhiji while commenting on the proposals as “ill-fated” maintained “that the proposals contemplated the splitting up of India into three parts, each having different ideas of governance.” Tendulkar, D.G., \textit{Mahatma}, 1940-45, Vol. VI (Bombay, Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri and D.G. Tendulkar, 1953) 90.

with Cripps Mission both in India and in the House of Commons, were confined to British India only as if the Indian States did not matter.”

Thirdly, while in all previous discussions the rulers and their representatives were treated as the sole accredited representatives of the States, this time. “Sir Stafford Cripps received a British Indian as a representative of the so-called states’ subjects Conference which is an adjunct of Congress.” In another letter of January 1943, the Chancellor further objected to Sir Stafford’s suggestion for establishing an effective machinery in the States for ventilating the grievances of the people on the plea that it was in direct contravention to the British Government’s policy of leaving the responsibility as well as the decision to the Rulers.

The Political Department in this context pointed out that the British Government had endorsed Sir Stafford’s suggestion primarily “in the interest of the rulers themselves,” but it was left to them to devise constitutional machinery best suited to them. This stand of the Political Department was not an altogether new one. During this period a noteworthy feature was the constant pressure which the British Government brought to bear on the princes to introduce reforms in their States. All this proved to be of little avail. Although in 1941 the Chancellor of the Chamber listed a record of “beneficent activities” in

60 FPD NO. 376, Political Secret, 1942.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Progs. C. of P. 1939 and 1950, n. 4, 15, 7.
65 In the Chamber’s session of 1941, The Chancellor maintained that, according to the information received by him, “States with 87.4 per cent (S.K.) of the total population of the States who are members of the Chamber of Princes have got local bodies in their territories, States with 67.9 per cent of population have got Legislative Assemblies, out of which 35.3 per cent have majority of elected members and 3.9 per cent have equality of elected and nominated members of the Assemblies, States repressing 53.2 per cent of the total population of States have recently appointed committees to examine the question of further association of the subjects with administration, 89.9 per
the States, Lord Linlithgow rather ruefully admitted in 1943 that he had been denied the satisfaction of seeing a final decision being reached during his Viceroyalty on the important issue of the privy purses of the rulers.\footnote{Progs. C. of P. 1943, n. 4, 13.}

**Attachment Scheme:** On April 16, 1943, the Viceroy announced the attachment scheme for the administrative integration of smaller states of Gujarat and Kathiwar agencies with the bigger ones in the interests of administrative efficiency. It was based on the recommendation of Shattock’s report\footnote{Urmila Phadnis, Towards the integration of the Indian States, 1919-1947, Delhi, 1968, pp. 57-79.} and involved the delegation of some of the powers which the British Government had over these non-jurisdictional *taluks* and estates to some bigger States. This was regarded as necessary because the “geographical and other factors precluded the absorption of three as into British India”\footnote{The Statesman (Calcutta), April 16, 1943.} and also because the Political Department was not an “administrative organization”\footnote{Ibid.} equipped with the machinery and resources of finance and personnel to deal with them efficiently. Moreover, the area concerned was so fragmented and scattered as to make it impossible to bring them under “unified central control.”\footnote{Ibid.}

The announcement, which came as a surprise to the Princes was opposed by the smaller states vehemently. The bigger States, however, were divided in their attitude and approach to the scheme. Some States such as Rajkot, Nawanagar and Porbander were critical of the scheme on

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\footnote{Progs. C. of P. 1941, n. 3, 54-5.}
the ground that it was contrary to the well-recognized principle that no unit, however small, falling within the category of Indian States could be referred to a new government and a new political relationship without their consent.\textsuperscript{71} Some of the bigger States, however, were happy and satisfied with the decision as it meant addition of some states to their territories\textsuperscript{72} and there were several claims and counter-claims for the same unit.

The Princes did not seem to be firm in their attitude to the scheme. The Thakurs of the affected areas i.e. of Kathiawar, Gujrat area also refused to accept the Instrument of Attachment.\textsuperscript{73} Instead, they came out with another scheme which was very much similar to joint co-operative grouping functioned or practiced in other areas.\textsuperscript{74} The Rulers of Bhadwa (which was attached to Gondal) also took the matter to the Judicial Commissioner of Kathiawar\textsuperscript{75} on the pretext that Bhadwa was a sovereign state and the British Government had not right to transfer it to any other state.\textsuperscript{76} The Judicial Commissioner decided in favour of Bhadwa. On appeal, the High Court upheld the decision of the Judicial Commissioner. It maintained that, while the suzerainty of the British Government over the States was undisputed, it had no authority over their officers, and consequently the judicial officers of Gondal state who were directed to exercise jurisdiction in this respect were not under the authority of the Crown Representative.\textsuperscript{77} The order regarding the attachment of Indian

\textsuperscript{71} The Thakurs of Bhadwa and Jasdan also sent their memorials to the Viceroy praying that they should not be forced to be attached to any bigger State, FPD Nos. 66 (5) and 66 924), Political Secret, 1943.
\textsuperscript{72} FPD No. 66 93), Political Secret, 1943
\textsuperscript{73} FPD NO. 66 (24), Political Secret, 1943.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} FPD. No. 66 (37), Political Secret, 1943. FPD. No. 66 (24), Political Secret, 1943
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} FPD. No. 66 (24), Political Secret, 1943
States made by the Crown Representative, it was held, was a “starting reversal of the purpose and policy clearly set out in the Government of India act”\(^78\) and, therefore was “ultra vires of the powers of the Crown Representative until the necessary parliamentary sanction has been obtained.”\(^79\)

The British Government, therefore, submitted an Attachment Bill to the Parliament; finally it became an Act in early 1944.\(^80\) As a result, all the estates and *taluks* of Gujarat and Western India covering an area of 7,000 sq. miles with a population of 8 *lakhs* and also revenue of nearly 80 *lakhs* were merged with the neighbouring States.\(^81\) In the beginning the Chamber of Princes found it difficult to make up its mind on the issue of the Attachment Scheme. It appeared to desire to express its grave concern and strong disapproval of the scheme in answer to the Viceroy’s speech in its 1943 session. In its original draft, the Scheme of Attachment was criticized as “subversive of the cherished heritage of the Indian people.” Serious concern was expressed over the growing tendency to ignore the correct importance and worth of our treaties, *sanads* and engagements.\(^82\)

But subsequently, under some pressure or on account of some considerations, the original draft was substituted by a new one; it simply wished the Viceroy to appreciate “the apprehension in the States concerned and many others” and requested him that “this question may also be taken up early, as proposed in respect of co-operative grouping.”\(^83\)

However, the ‘Attachment Act’ which was called as a step for “qualified merger” led the Princes to apprehend that it would really end up in the complete absorption of the smaller States. The Princes were too

\(^78\) FPD No. 66 (37), Political Secret, 1943
\(^79\) Ibid.
\(^80\) FPD No. 214, Political Secret, 1944; also see, Appendix IX.
\(^81\) FPD Nos 78 and 214, Political Secret, 1944.
\(^82\) PA. CH. III (b) 71 of 1946.
\(^83\) Progs C. of P. 1943, n. 4, 50.
resentful that the British Government had shown scant respect for the treaties and agreements which were in force between them and the British.\textsuperscript{84} This resentment increased day by day because of the several complaints of continuous direct intervention by the Crown Department. Under the circumstances, the Princes realized that it was necessary for them to meet the Viceroy and place their fears and doubts before him.

A deputation headed by the Chancellor, accordingly, met the Viceroy on September 18, 1944. And, among other things,\textsuperscript{85} it suggested that the Instrument of Attachment should be revised in consultation with the States. They were definitely opposed to further extension of the scheme. They also expressed their intention to move a resolution on the subject in the Chamber of Princes.

The Viceroy, in a letter dated December 21, 1944, replied to the various points raised by the Princes’ delegation. He maintained that, while the Government was prepared to accept any scheme on the Joint Services and Attachment, there was no reason why the existing experiment, initiated after so much consideration thought and labour, should be suspended.

In the meanwhile, the Princes, as was the practice submitted to the Viceroy the drafts of resolutions to be placed before the Chamber’s Session of 1944. One of the resolutions urged that the Crown’s

\textsuperscript{84} PA. CH. III (b) 71 of 1946.

\textsuperscript{85} The Princes discussed issues like joint services for the States, protection of the Princely order against attack from British Indian leaders and press; the scheme of attachment of small States; the industrial policy; post-war reconstruction, courts of arbitration and treaty rights. To elucidate a few points, on the issue of Joint High Courts, the Princes suggested that they should be allowed to draft a scheme regarding minimum standards of administration before any Joint Services were started. On the criticism against their administration from British Indian leaders and press, the Princes desired that the present laws and regulation in British India protecting the Indian States from such attack should be further tightened. For this purpose, the Princes suggested that the representatives of the Government of India should meet the Princes and find some way out for them.
relationship with the States and the Crown’s powers in respect of the States could not and should not be transferred to any third party. It further read that the fulfillment of the fundamental obligations arising out of treaties, engagements and sanads should remain an integral part of His Majesty’s policy.

Commenting on this resolution, the political Department wrote on November 26, 1944, to the Chancellor that “it would be undesirable at this time to ventilate in public the subject matter of the proposed resolution with the very delicate issues that arise out of it.”\(^{86}\) It also expressed the hope that the Princes would not move a resolution on the subject.

The rejection of the demands put forward by the Princes and, particularly the rejection of the resolution, was discussed by the Standing Committee of the Chamber. It came to the conclusion that the graded deterioration in the position of States, particularly in the last few years, and the disregard of their legitimate interests, culminating in the views expressed in these two communications had greatly and gravely affected their relationship with the Crown. They also realized that the rejection of almost all the vital points raised by the Princes’ delegation left them no longer in a position to discharge their special responsibility as office-bearers of the Chamber. They, therefore, felt that they had been left no option but to tender their resignation.

In their letter they intimated the Viceroy of their decision to resign. The Princes, however, assured him that their resignation would in no way affect their contribution to the war efforts.

The resignation of the standing committee of the Chamber resulted in the postponement of its formal session that was scheduled to meet on December 4, 1944. However, after the assurance of the Viceroy to the

\(^{86}\) PA. CH. V (d) 436 of 1943-46.
Standing Committee, there would be no further transfer of relationship of the Crown with the states without their consent. The Standing Committee withdrew its resignation. A compromise thus resulted on the issue.

Though the enactment of Attachment Act was a step in the right direction, yet the opposition of the Princes’ did not allow its extension to smaller estates of other regions. Co-operative grouping was not aimed at greater administrative efficiency in small States. But in practice it could not be very effective due to the fact that almost invariably the coordinating officers had only advisory duties. It also lacked executive functions, as was pointed out by political officers like E.W.R. Lumby, Co-operative grouping could achieve its purpose only when the officers concerned also had been entrusted with ‘executive functions.” The Co-operative grouping in police matters, however, enabled the Princes to avail themselves of common reserve police force for quelling disturbances, and common judicial officers of high caliber provided better judicial administration to the people.

**Indian States in 1945:** It was quite clear by early 1945 that the war would soon end and that the nationalist movement would soon intensify its demand for freedom. It was also evident that the war-time restriction and measures to quell popular movement in British India could not be continued for long after the end of the war. Besides, the All India States Peoples Conference (hereafter AISPC) was strengthened by its identification with the Congress as well as by the experience which its

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87 Ibid.
88 FPD NO. 305, Political Secret, 1945.
89 This identification of the AISPC with the Congress was evident by the approach it had taken on the war issue and also in its statements which mostly endorsed the Congress line, ‘States’ people and the War for democracy,” The States People, Vol. 2, Nos. 13-14, October-November 1939, 4, and ‘Princes’ Claim Repudiated: People not Bound by Treaties,’” The States People, Vol. 2, No. 5, February 1940, 13-14. Besides, the Congress, in consonance with the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, appointed a sub-committee consisting of Nehru,
workers had gained by participating in the Quit India Movement.\(^90\) It was evident that the popular movements in the States and the demands of the masses which were bypassed in 1939 would have to be taken seriously by the Princes.

The Princes were aware of these tendencies. In a letter dated March 29, 1945,\(^91\) the Maharaja of Bikaner wrote to the Maharaja of Patiala that “the period of inactivity necessitated by the overriding consideration of War”\(^92\) was coming to an end. He also stated that opinion in England appeared to indicate that the British public was “impatient for a real move forward which will assure to Indian the status and powers of a Dominion.”\(^93\) He further maintained that, on federal discussion, political opinion had moved forward considerably. During 1930-39, the participation of the Princes had been a condition precedent to the grant of federal responsibility; it might not be so new. The position of “vantage” thus had been lost to the Princes. As a consequence the situation called for a “reorientation” of their policy.\(^94\) The Maharaja of Patiala agreed with the view expressed by the ruler of Bikaner. Coincidentally, the Nawab of Bhopal, then Chancellor, took initiative in convening a meeting of a special committee of Rulers and ministers in Bombay in April-May

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\(^90\) Though no material is available to trace the activities of the AISPC during 1942-44, yet interviews with some of the prominent workers like S. Das and J.N. Vyas as well as a resolution of September 1945 of the A.I.C.C. congratulating the States’ people who participated in the movement indicates that the States’ people participated actively in it. INC.RES. 1940-46, n. 45, 51.

\(^91\) In March 1945, Lord Wavell flew to England to have consultations with British Cabinet.

\(^92\) PA. CH. III © 71 of 1943.

\(^93\) Ibid.

\(^94\) Ibid.
This Committee examined the question of the political adjustment between the States and British India. In another joint conference of Rulers and Ministers held in June 1945, a detailed resolution on the subject was adopted.

The resolution reviewed the position of the Princes in the new political situation. It was also felt that the Cripps formula and the recent developments had already indicated that British Indian might be a Dominion even without adherence of the States. The main reason, therefore, which previously necessitated accommodating the claims of the states in any constitutional change no longer existed. The resolution further emphasized that the war efforts of the states were not likely to make up, for the purpose of negotiation, the loss in the position which the States once enjoyed. Besides, the powers of Paramountcy in case of non-acceding States also could not be in a position in a Dominion India effectively to fulfill its obligations of defense or to safeguard the non-acceding states against economic strangulation or discrimination by the Dominion Government.96

The resolution further maintained that, under such circumstances, it was essential for the states to utilize the present time when gratitude for the war efforts of the States was till fresh in the mind of the Government and there was more inclination than might be found later to support their legitimate claims and aspirations.97 Finally, it concluded that “for this purpose the states should internally set up their houses in order and externally should align themselves with the forces of progress. Nothing can serve to secure an effective voice for the States in the future negotiations unless they established themselves as well-governed and

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95 PA. CH. III (b) 70 of 1946.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., 39-40.
progressive units, second to none in support of legitimate aspiration of India.”

The Conference also appointed a Constitutional Advisory Committee to prepare “the case of States for use at appropriate place.” The first meeting of the Committee was held in July 1945. It was to consider the proposals for an interim government as given in a broadcast of Lord Wavell on June 14, 1945. It recommended the setting up of suitable machinery for regular consultations between the representatives of British Indian and representatives of the native States with regard to matters of common concern during the interim period.

The Committee unanimously endorsed the importance of progressive reforms in the States. It expected the Rulers to introduce them as soon as possible. It too recommended certain prerequisite reforms as fundamental, namely, the right of franchise, the right of the States’ people to select, directly to indirectly, its own representatives in the legislature; a competent and trained judiciary; security of law, clear demarcation between the private expenditure of the Ruler and States’ expenditure, fair and equitable taxation, etc.

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98 Ibid.
100 PA. CH. III (b) 70 of 1946, 17.
101 In a broadcast, Lord Wavell disclosed a fresh plan designed to ease the political situation and to advance Indian towards her goal for self-government. He added that the measures proposed were provisional. Simultaneously with the announcement of his plan on the composition of an interim government, Lord Wavell invited the leaders of the Congress and of the Muslim League. The Congress met on June 30, but failed to reach an agreement. The negotiations broke down finally on July 14, 1945, Menon, n. 54, 58.
102 PA. CH. III (b) 77 of 1946.
103 Ibid.
Chamber of Princes and Constitutional Reforms: Soon after the Committee’s Report, a detailed resolution on constitutional reforms in the States was brought forward in the session of the Chamber in January 1946. It declared in unequivocal terms that “there shall be popular institutions with elected majorities to ensure close and effective association of the people with the governance of the states.” The declaration also proclaimed that the fundamental rights such as the rights of civil liberty, property, equality before law, freedom of conscience, rights of free association of free speech, etc, etc, should be granted to the States’ subjects. As regards administrative reforms, certain essential principles like an independent judiciary, demarcation of the administrative budgets from the civil lists, fair and equitable taxation were required to be strictly enforced.

These recommendations were implemented in good number of states. To start with, on March 31, 1946, the Maharaja of Travancore announced that more departments would be transferred to the popular representatives of the States and the responsibility of the states administration must be borne by them. The Maharaja of Patiala announced the repeal of the much-criticized “Phulkain Pact, known as Hidayat of 1988 (Bikrami) which greatly restricted people’s freedom of speech and action.” The Maharaja of Rewa, on April 2, 1946, announced his decision to appoint a Committee of Enquiry with Sir Alladi Krishanswami Aiyar, former Advocate-General for introducing popular governments. On May 10, the Maharaja of Sandur proclaimed the “Sandur State Constitution, 1946,” which was more liberal and

105 Ibid.
106 Hindu (Madras), March 23, 1946.
107 Hindu (Madras), March 24, 1946.
108 Times of India (Bombay), April 4, 1946.
democratic in character than the earlier constitution. Bikaner also announced its intention to introduce a democratic constitution as early as possible. In Bhopal, final steps to grant adult franchise and representation to all sections of the State in the legislature were being finalized. It was understood that the Maharaja of Baroda had instructed his Dewan to set up an all-representative Committee to draft a new constitution conceding further reforms in the State. In Hyderabad, the Nawab of Chhatrtari, announced far-reaching changes in the constitutional pattern of the State. These changes envisaged the inauguration of a new Legislative Assembly in October 1946, removal of the ban on the State Congress, inclusion of representatives of the people in the Executive Council, etc. In Cochin, on July 29 the Maharaja announced his decision to revise the Constitution Act. He maintained: “Personally, I have always felt… that the States are an integral part of India and should, therefore, act in unison with British India Provinces…. For, if India becomes great, every part of it becomes great.” Gwalior announced its decision to appoint two non-officials to be the ministers and to be in charge of the departments which vitally affected the interests of the people. Constitutional reforms were also introduced by Jhabua, Sangli, Fraidkot, Bundi, Baroda, Ratlam,

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109 Hindu (Madras), May 14, 1946.  
110 Times of India (Bombay) June 22, 1946; Leader (Allahabad), September, 3, 1946; and Hindu (Madras), August 5, 1946.  
111 Hindu ((Madras), July 2, 1946.  
112 Times of India, June 14, 1946.  
113 Hindu, July 30, 1946.  
114 Leader (Allahabad), August 5, 1956.  
115 Times of India, August 8, 1946.  
116 Times of India, October 8, 1946.  
117 Times of India, October 11, 1946.  
118 Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), October 27, 1946.  
119 Hindu, January 12, 1947.  
120 Hindu, January 18, 1947.  
121 Times of India, January 31, 1947.
Mysore, Kurundwad (S.I.), Rochcha, Datia, Manipur, Bhor, Jamkhandi, Udaipur, Sirmoor, Mandi, Bilaspur, etc.

Post-war educational schemes were also drawn up in many States. Hyderabad’s 14 years plan, costing fifty crores of rupees, aimed at providing educational facilities for five lakhs more pupils in the primary stage; for about 2 62 lakhs in the lower secondary stage and for 1.31 lakh in the higher secondary stage. Cochin’s plan envisaged free compulsory primary education for children between 6 and 10 years of age and the establishment of a technological institute for mechanical and civil engineering. Patiala also launched a scheme of compulsory education for children of the age of 6 to 10 years. Jodhpur, Bhopal, Bundi, Bahawalpur, Palitana, Kapurthala, Patna, Rajkot and Radhanpur also prepared similar schemes for educational development in their States.

While in some of these States reforms were substantial and their introduction smooth, in many other states they were more eyewash or very inadequate. In a majority of these States reforms failed to satisfy the demands and aspirations of the people concerned and political agitation for constitutional government continued. Even in States like Travancore and Mysore where an element of responsible government was introduced, the reforms were so devised and advanced that they could not evoke necessary co-operation of politically conscious sections of their people.

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122 Times of India, January 31, 1947.
123 Times of India, January 11, 1947
124 Hindu, February 18, 1947.
125 Assam Tribune, (Gauhati), February 6, 1947.
126 Times of India, February 8, 1947.
127 Times of India, March 25, 1947.
128 Hindustan Times (New Delhi), February 6, 1947.
129 Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore), July 11, 1946.
130 Hindustan Times, August 31, 1946.
131 Statesman (Calcutta), October 11, 1946.
132 Hindustan Times, October 10, 1946.
133 Leader, August 17, 1946.
While the Mysore State Congress accused the Dewan of “dilatory and disruptive methods” and threatened to start satyagraha in case he did not resign. The Travancore State Congress rejected the draft proposals on the constitution and declared that it would take no part in its finalization. While the Rulers wished to retain the substance of power with them selves, people’s representatives stood for the transfer of full powers to them. Consequently, even big and middle-sized States, which played a decisive role in the decisions of the Chamber failed to implement them fully, and agitation and struggle as well as repression continued at least in some of these States. The Chamber resolution, it seems, hardly touched a great majority of its members. They felt no necessity to move with the times and mostly relied states such as Tehri Garhwal, Orchha and Nabha as well as Kotah, Jind, Faridkot and Kashmir, the people had to fight for their political rights. While in Tehri Garhwal the Praja Mandal was successful in getting the ban against it lifted and Orchha State Congress could compel the Rulers to agree to set up a constitution-making body. Rulers of Dungarpur, Kotah, Jind and Faridkot could manage to resist popular demands. Peoples' struggle resulted in the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah and the ban on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s entry in Kashmir.

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134 Hindu, February 19, 1947.
135 Hindu, February 20, 1947.
136 Tribune, August 28, 1946.
137 Hindustan Times, January 4, 1947.
139 Dawn (Delhi), March 3, 1947.
140 Hindustan Times, November 23, 1947.
141 National Herald (Lucknow), March 27, 1947.
143 The Tribune, August 28, 1946.
144 Hindustan Times, January 4, 1947.
This attracted the attention of the Indian people as to overshadow the Ruler’s efforts towards constitutional reforms.\textsuperscript{145}

In brief, though the Princes’ resolution with regard to constitutional reforms was a step in the right direction and was an indication of their awareness of the needs of the times, actual steps were too slow to keep pace with the rapidly changing situation. The Princes failed to comprehend the growing aspirations of the people of Indian States and therefore could not carry their people with them on the question regarding the position of the States in the future political set-up.

\textsuperscript{145} Bazaz, N.K., \textit{op.cit.}, pp 243-75.