CHAPTER - VII

PATEL AND THE HYDERABAD PROBLEM
Although, the other Princely States acceded to the Indian Union, Hyderabad desired to remain independent as a 'Third Dominion' and as an 'Islamic State' after the lapse of Paramountcy. Kasim Razvi, a terrorist and a fanatic leader had the desire to make Hyderabad a theocratic totalitarian independent Islamic State with the Nizam as the head.

Hyderabad occupies the most strategic place in the political map of India. Hindus constitute the majority population. Therefore, its accession to the Indian Union was essential. Had it been allowed to be an independent Islamic State, it would have become 'a Cancer in the belly of India'.

Although Sardar Patel intended to settle the problem of Hyderabad peacefully, the fanatic Nizam of Hyderabad, a terrorist and anti-Hindu Kasim Razvi and the violent communists came in his way.
In this chapter the rule of the Nizam who was a puppet in the hands of Kasim Razvi, the vandalism and the inhuman atrocities and the anti-Hindu activities of Kasim Razvi and the communists and the untold miseries and sufferings of the Hindus of Hyderabad are examined. The vital role played by the Sardar in settling the Hyderabad problem and bringing it under the Indian Union is also assessed. Incidentally, different traits of his personality have been brought to light in the course of the discussion.

Problem of Hyderabad:

Hyderabad would have been another hard nut to crack but for the Sardar's strong, determined and intelligent handling. Hyderabad is situated in the heart of India with more than 86 percent of Hindu, 12½ percent Muslim, 1½ percent Christian and other population. Since, it is in the heart of India, it occupies a strategic and significant position. Regarding its strategic position, Sir William Barton, a resident of Hyderabad submitted
a memorandum containing the following significant observation: "Flung almost completely across the Indian peninsula, the great state of Hyderabad holds a strategic position of the first importance both from the political and military point of view. In an emergency, it could practically isolate the South from the North."¹

Nizam Mir Usman Alikhan Bahadur, a Muslim ruler of Hyderabad, 'His Exalted Highness' was aggressively hostile to the Indian Dominion. Being the seventh ruler, he succeeded to the 'gaddi' on 29th August 1911. The title of 'His Exalted Highness' was conferred on him as a hereditary distinction in 1918. After sometime, by an autographed letter from the British king, he was granted the title of 'Faithful Ally of the British Government'. The principal ambition of the Nizam was to secure Dominion status for his state on the withdrawal of the British power from India and to become a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations directly.

The Nizam had the pride of possessing the prefix 'H.E.H' to his name, while all other Maharajas had the prefix of only 'H.H.' This additional 'E' had developed in him a special superiority complex. He was the most orthodox Muslim, a miser to the core and the greatest passion of his life was wealth and power. He was considered to be the richest man in India and one among the few richest persons in the world. It is said that he was not knowing that there was such a word as 'spending' in the dictionary. "He was a modern croesus, with a civil list of £1,000 a day, and yet he chose to dress himself like a beggar."2

The Nizam, being the highest power-monger had employed subterfuge and strategy. He "...dreamt of the supreme glory of becoming the head of the entire Muslim world."3 He always maintained the balance between forces and personalities. He would organise a counter-check on persons growing in power. He trusted nobody and suspected everybody. He had organised an efficient and effective spy system. He had universal

system of espionage and employed spies on everyone, not sparing his own son, ministers, enemies and high officials. To placate the Political Department, he had appointed an Executive Council to advise him. But, he manoeuvred in such a way that his will alone prevailed.

The Nizam remained loyal to the British at all times when the stability of the empire was endangered. Immeasurable was his service to the British during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The decisive role he played in those critical times is beautifully depicted in these words, "If the Nizam goes, all goes" of course he did not "go" and as Sir Sidney Low so gratefully acknowledged it - "The British Raj was Saved."^4

The Nizam issued a Firman on July 11, 1947 that Hyderabad would remain a sovereign independent state when the Paramountcy lapsed on August 15, 1947. Similar Firman was issued on Berar on August 15, 1947.5 He


even approached the British Government to recognise Hyderabad as an independent 'Third Dominion' of the British Commonwealth. But Lord Mountbatten snubbed 'The faithful ally of His Majesty' saying that it could never happen. Nizam ahad considered the accession worse than paramountcy. He wanted Hyderabad to be an Islamic State and was opposed to the grant of responsible Government to the people, unless he could ensure a majority vote for the 15 percent Muslim population.

**Kasim Razvi's Fanaticism and His Meeting with Patel**

The Nizam's main source of revenue came from the Hindus but he had no love for them. His police force and army were mainly recruited from the Muslims. It was an accepted fact in Hyderabad to harass the Hindus and collect money from them. It was not surprising, therefore that Hyderabad gradually attracted the most reactionary, revolutionary and fanatical Muslim elements from all over India. All of them joined hands with Kasim Razvi who was the leader of the Ittehad-ul-Muslimin
movement. Razvi's main aim was to make Hyderabad a theocratic, totalitarian independent Islamic State. Kasim Razvi exhibited his fanaticism and deep interest in establishing Islamic State in one of his speeches delivered to some of his leading workers. He declared, "Hyderabad is an Islamic State. The Indian Union is trying to wipe out this Muslim rule from the Deccan. Remember that there are four-and-a-half Crores of Muslims in a Dominion looking to us to raise the banner of this Islamic State... We believe in God. We have no other friends except Allah, who has created this Islamic State and who shall never let us down. Quran is in one hand and the sword is in the other. Let us march forward; cut our enemies to pieces; establish our Islamic Supremacy... A Hindu who is a kafir, a worshipper of stone and monkey (laughter), who drinks Cow's urine and eats Cowdung in the name of religion (renewed laughter), and who is a barbarian, in every sense of the word, wants to rule us! What an ambition and what a day - dream! ..." 6

It may be observed here how critical Razvi was about Hindu religion and what a low and wrong notion he had about it. His main intention was to instigate the Muslims against Hindus and establish Islamic supremacy, even through bloodshed.

On 12th April 1948 under an authoritative Associated Press of India, Kasim Razvi made another still more aggressive statement. He cried, 'The day is not far off when the waves of the Bay of Bengal will be swashing the feet of our Sovereign'. He confidently asserted that he would hoist very shortly the Asaf Jahi Flag on the Red Fort in Delhi.

In this tense and hostile atmosphere, it was not possible to carry on any negotiations; still Sardar Patel continued with his efforts to find a way out. On 16th April 1948, in a meeting with Laik Ali, he said that if the question of Hyderabad was not settled and if the same tense violent atmosphere continued without

any check in Hyderabad, the Government of India could not remain a silent spectator. Sardar clearly said:

"you know as well as I do where power resides and with whom the fate of the negotiation must finally lie in Hyderabad. The gentleman (Kasim Razvi) who seems to dominate Hyderabad has given his answer. He has categorically stated that if the Indian Dominion comes to Hyderabad it will find nothing but the bones and ashes of one and a half crores of Hindus. If that is the position, then it seriously undermine the whole future of the Nizam and his dynasty. I am speaking to you plainly because I do not want you to be under any misapprehension. The Hyderabad problem will have to be settled as has been done in the case of other states..., If its demand to maintain an independent status is persisted in, it is bound to fail."^8

Therefore, Sardar, in his forthright manner made very clear that hundreds of such Kasim Razvi's and the Nizams could not frighten him and keep Hyderabad independent and establish Islamic supremacy there.

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The Nizam and the Standstill Agreement:

The help rendered by Mountbatten to the Sardar at this critical juncture was crucial. Mountbatten was hopeful that sanity would one day dawn on the Nizam. Though he tried to impress upon the delegation of the Nizam the necessity and advantage of Hyderabad acceding to India, he was not much successful. The delegation suggested that the Government of India should enter into a Standstill Agreement with Hyderabad without its accession. The Nizam seemed to have shown interest in signing a treaty which would cover the three subjects of defence, external affairs and communications provided the term. 'Instrument of Accession' was given some such sugar coating as 'Articles of Association', etc. Sardar was not prepared for this. He insisted that a referendum should be held in the state on the question of the accession of the state to India. The Nizam, encouraged by Jinnah, refused to accept this course. Sir Walter Monckton, Constitutional Adviser of the Nizam tried his best to reach a satisfactory settlement. He was a personal friend of Mountbatten who thought that he would be able to influence the Nizam through Monckton. On the
other hand, the Nizam thought that Monckton would be able to get a better deal from Mountbatten.

Finally, an understanding was arrived at, according to which the Government of India were prepared to conclude a Standstill Agreement with the Nizam if the latter was willing to concede the substance of accession without formally signing the Instrument of Accession. It was a great concession made by the Government of India and the Sardar for the sake of a peaceful settlement with the Nizam. The Executive Council of the Nizam also advised him to accept it. The Nizam formally approved the decision of the Executive Council but deferred signing the agreement till the next day. Here, the Nizam went wrong. Had he signed the agreement without postponing it, probably, he would have avoided the future serious catastrophe. The Muslim press started false propaganda to demoralise the Hindus.

But Kasim Razvi prevailed on the Nizam to reject the terms and stop signing the agreement which had been approved by his Executive Council. The senior Princes

10. Ibid., pp.72-73, Enclosure to letter No.63, for some textual extract of a false propaganda.
Durreshewar—Nizam's daughter-in-Law advised the Nizam to join the Indian Union; otherwise the fate that overtook her father the last Sultan of Turkey might overtake him also. But the Ittehad-ul-Mussalmin and its leader Kasim Razvi could not allow him to heed to this warning. Kasim Razvi in a letter to Nizam said: "Mr. Patel belongs to the class of Hitler and would not even like to change the name... Cannot Hyderabad learn from Mr. Patel the one quality that he possesses—openness? If Mr. Patel is nothing else, he is at least open and candid. Why not state facts straight although they may be (bitter)..."  

This was the highest compliment given to the Sardar, not by his friends but by a bitter enemy Kasim Razvi. Therefore, Patel's frankness, open-mindedness and forthrightness were liked both by his friends and foes alike.

Lord Mountbatten called this act of the Nizam as most unstatesmanlike. There was no option for the

11. Ibid., pp.80-81, 'Translation of the Statement given by the President of the Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen dated 14th October 1947 and reported in Rahbar-E-Deccan on 15-1-1957 Falsi'. 
Nizam except to sign the two documents - Standstill Agreement and Agreement between the Government of India and himself - which was earlier approved by the Executive Council. When the Nizam's delegation was returning to Delhi with the signature of the agreement, the Razakars surrounded the houses of the members of the delegation and would not let them go to Delhi. Kasim Eazvi argued that in view of the tribal invasion which had been started in Kashmir, India would find itself too weak to dictate to Hyderabad. He also argued with the Nizam that he would get better terms if he changed his advisers. The Nizam heeded to Eazvi's suggestion and changed the delegation and included in it members of Eazvi's choice - Moin Navaz Jung, Abdur Rahim and Pingle Reddy. On the recommendation of Jinnah, Laik Ali Khan was appointed Prime Minister of Hyderabad. Razvi also participated in the negotiations and met Sardar Patel at Delhi. K.M. Munshi presents beautifully the following report of this interesting interview and it is worth quoting:

"...Razvi came in and, giving a nodding 'salam' to Sardar, took a chair, there was silence. 'Well', asked the Sardar, 'what do you want?' Razvi had the look of a fanatic, his rolling eyes emitting fire as if he were possessed.
He glared angrily for a moment. ...Sardar's eyes were unflinching. Razvi broke the silence by saying, 'I want a change of heart from you...'. Sardar remarked, 'A change of heart is only necessary for one whose heart is full of poison! Why don't you let Hyderabad remain independent?' asked Razvi. 'I have gone beyond all possible limits. I have conceded to Hyderabad what I did not concede to any other state,' returned Sardar. 'But I want you to understand the difficulties of Hyderabad', pursued Razvi. 'I don't see any difficulty, unless you have come to some understanding with Pakistan', was Sardar's reply. 'If you do not see our difficulties, we will not yield,' cried Razvi working himself up to a state of excitement. 'We shall fight and die to the last man of Hyderabad'. 'How can I stop you from committing suicide if you want to?' Sardar bluntly replied. 'You do not know the Muslims of Hyderabad', repeated Razvi. 'We shall sacrifice everything for our independence'. 'If it comes to sacrifice, India has shown what it can do, but Hyderabad has yet to show what it can', came the cool reply. Razvi now began a hysterical tirade on the shedding of blood for the 'Deen' and the 'Millat'. Sardar listened in stolid silence to what Razvi had to say and, when he paused for breath, said, 'I would advise you to see the Sun before it is too late. Do not plunge into darkness while the light is still visible.'

This conversation is another illustration to show that the Sardar was straightforward, adacious and frank in putting his views. He never minced matters! Come what may! He also meant what he said.

By his interview with the Sardar, Razvi's egoism that he would be able to mend or bend Sardar was proved false. It was also proved beyond doubt that Sardar was indomitable and he was all in all in the Congress Party and he would mean what he said. Keeping this view in mind, Razvi, while giving a report of this interview to a crowd of Razakars on 25th November said: "I met Sardar Patel. It will not be out of place if I call Sardar Patel the Congress."13

In spite of Razvi's heroic efforts to resist, on 29th November, the Nizam put his signature to the Standstill Agreement along with a secret understanding that he would not accede to Pakistan.14

The terms of the Standstill Agreement signed by the Nizam were much different from those embodied in the Instruments of Accession signed by the other Princes. According to the Agreement, the arrangements that had

13. Ibid., p.72.

existed between India and Hyderabad before August 15 in the administration of their common affairs including external affairs, defence and communications were to be continued. The Indian Government had to withdraw its troops from the State and should not claim many paramountcy rights over it. India agreed to send its Agent to Hyderabad and accept one from the Nizam in Delhi for the "better execution of the purposes" of the settlement. Any dispute between the two parties over the agreement which would be tenable only for a period of one year was to be referred to arbitration.

To consider the Nizam as an equal and to accept his arbitrary terms seriously hurt the feelings of the Sardar. But in the prevailing circumstances, there was no other go. Sardar, defending the November Agreement in the Constituent Assembly on 29th November said that India would have been happy, if Hyderabad had acceded to her as other States had done. But "Consistent with our policy to secure agreement not by coercion, but as far as possible with the maximum degree of goodwill on both sides and with due regard to the overall position, we felt that an agreement of this nature, even for a
limited period, would have considerable advantages over the absence of any agreement whatsoever."

The Government of India hoped that the step would ensure communal peace for one year at least and Lord Mountbatten had expected that during this period heads would cool down and hearts would soften and the Nizam would accede to India like all the other rulers. The Nizam and his Razakar advisers regarded the Agreement 'as providing breathing space in which to secure the withdrawal of the Indian troops of their position and strength to a stage when they would be able to assert the independence of the State.' Sardar as a realist did not take the proposals of the Nizam at their face value. However, this agreement enabled India to appoint its Agent-General and K.M. Munshi who was a prominent lawyer and an able politician was chosen. He had both the skill and acumen required for playing a very difficult role at a critical time. "He (K.M. Munshi) accepted the office of Agent-General in an honorary

16. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.337.
capacity at a critical stage and he worked unremittingly
and with single-minded devotion to duty, and at a very
great personal sacrifice to bring the Hyderabad problem
to a successful conclusion."\[17\]

The Nizam counted on two factors to protect himself
against India - one was the British and another was
Mr. Jinnah of Pakistan. He had the illusion that the
British would support him even after their withdrawal
from India. On August 14, 1947, the Nizam told the last
of the British Residents in Hyderabad, "It is still my
desire and the desire of Hyderabad to remain within the
Family of Nations known as the British Commonwealth..."\[18\]

Violation of Standstill Agreement and
Atrocities of Razakars and Communists:

Hardly before the ink was dry on the Standstill
Agreement, the Nizam issued two ordinances which clearly
violated its terms. One of them placed restriction on
the export of all precious metals to India and the other

\[17\] 'Press Note of the States Ministry' dated 21st November,
1948, quoted in K.L. Punjabi, The Indomitable Sardar,

\[18\] K.M. Munshi, op.cit., p. 56.
declared that Indian currency was not a legal tender in Hyderabad. In addition, the Hyderabad Government advanced a loan of Rs.22 Crores to Pakistan.

The Indian Government protested against these Firmans. The Nizam outwardly pretended to carry on negotiations with the Indian Government but he made secret preparations for a military combat. In a letter to Sardar dated 31st October 1947, B.G.Kher writes: "The news appearing in the papers that the Nizam is making large purchases of arms in England and is arranging to arm the Muslims who have migrated to Hyderabad in large numbers has made the people, particularly in the districts adjoining Hyderabad, panicky." Therefore, it was a confirmed fact that the Nizam was equipping the Hyderabad Government for a military combat. This was confirmed by another letter dated 21st October 1947 written to the Sardarji by O.P.Ramaswamy Reddy. He writes, "We reliably learn that the Nizam has about 50,000 equipped troops and that through Ittihad Majlis he is arming every Muslim in the State." Again, the same O.P. Ramaswamy Reddy writes to Sardar on January 1948, "The

Nizam has about 500 regular and 50,000 irregular troops."21

The Nizam encouraged and incited the Razakars to oppress the Hindus, spread violence and create lawlessness. Razvi called for five lakhs of volunteers to be "the liberators of the Muslims of India from the yoke of the Indian Union."22 It was beyond doubt that Hyderabad was ready to wage war against the Hindus and India. Therefore, in a letter to Lord Mountbatten dated 24th August 1947, Sardar wrote: "I have authentic information that the recent activities of Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen are designed almost to create a feeling of terror amongst the non-Muslim population... it receives active support from responsible Muslims both inside and outside Government. Indeed there are... reliable reports that it is being sponsored by H.E.H.himself."23

Therefore, for all these militant activities of Razakars, and the atmosphere of terror, the Nizam was responsible. Even the Muslim Nobility feared the Razakars. Once, Sir Salar Jung, an important nobleman of Hyderabad

21. Ibid., p.130
told K.M. Munshi "Our lives and properties are at the mercy of Razvi... I have served the state for years... but all the time I am afraid for my life."²⁴

Kasim Razvi took the law into his own hands and almost declared war against India as though he was the Nizam. He knew no reason and rhyme. Once he said to K.M. Munshi: "You must ask your Government to tear this Instrument into pieces at once and throw it into wastepaper basket. The Government are trying to do so and I offer them a further opportunity. But so far as the Indian Union is concerned, I cannot grant more than one month's time. This declaration of mine can be taken as a declaration of war."²⁵

By the end of 1947, Razakars had a force of 2 lakhs of volunteers who got arms and ammunitions from Hyderabad Government. The borders of other states and provinces of India were raided frequently by these militant Razakars. They plundered and looted the property of the Hindus, raped and abducted the Hindu women, looted and

burnt the Hindu villages, converted them forcibly to Islam and indulged in objectionable speeches which inflamed communal passions and fury and thus created an atmosphere of terror. The cruelty of the Razakars knew no bounds. In one village, "the able-bodied men were... taken to the bazar where they were made to stand on line and shot dead. The ornaments of the women, including the 'Mangalasutra' a sacred ornament with which no married women would part were then snatched away, after that the rest of Razakars went into the village sprinkled petrol on the houses and set fire to them. Sometimes people were burnt in their own houses or thrown into the fire." 26 Hindu men, women and children began to flee in panic. Razvi threatened, "If the Indian Union ventures to enter Hyderabad, the invaders will see the burning everywhere of the bodies of one crore and sixty-five lakhs. We, Muslims will not spare others when we ourselves are not allowed to exist." 27

26. Ibid., p.130.

Ibid., pp.131-132 for the original text of the report of the Lawyers' Vigilance Committee which included a member of the Legislative Council on the ghastly atrocities committed by Razakars on Hindu men and Women and children.

27. Ibid., p.37.
But Sardar Patel could not be cowed-down by a paper-tiger like Razvi. He had made his policy very clear with regard to Hyderabad while speaking at Junagadh on 13th November 1947. He said, "If Hyderabad is to be saved, it must effect a radical change in its methods and policy. In the world of today, only those who have guts can make their voice felt. If Hyderabad wishes to be heard, it must follow bravely and courageously the popular will. Otherwise, Hyderabad's fate will sooner or later be the same as those of other Rulers and dynasties who had attempted to thwart the popular will only at the cost of their existence."

The atrocities of Razakars were never ending. "Between April 1947 and March 1948, approximately 250 villages in the state had been looted or burnt, 4,000 houses set on fire, 500 persons killed or wounded and 450 women molested. Yet the Hyderabad radio claimed that this was all untrue." The atrocities of Razakars touched the border areas also. Therefore,


the Governments of Madras, Bombay and Central Provinces asked for military protection. 30

Sardar told the Premiers who had met him on February 21st 1947 at Delhi that Hyderabad was granted leniency because of its unique position. He assured them that the Government of India was ready for all eventualities. It was apparent that Hyderabad was making all military preparations, importing arms and ammunitions through an Australian Sydney Cotton, who was smuggling them through Karachi by air. Some new air-fields were being constructed specially for this purpose. The arms and ammunitions and gun-barrels were supplied through Goa and from Bombay side. 31

The Sardar was very firm on introducing responsible Government in Hyderabad. But, unfortunately, on March 5th, 1948, he had a serious heart-attack and further consultation with the Nizam and others could not be

30. The Razakars and Muslim troops were entering Madras borders and creating panic. For the details of their atrocities see, Durga Das (Ed.), op.cit., 'Extract' - O.P. Ramaswamy Reddy's Letter to Sardar Patel dt. 21st October 1947, pp.119-120, O.P. Ramaswamy Reddy was a Prime Minister of Madras in 1947.

continued. On March 26, V.P. Menon sent a letter to the Nizam pointing out the breaches of the Standstill Agreement. It upset the Prime Minister of Hyderabad so much that he cried that "the Nizam was willing to die a martyr and that he and two lakhs of Muslims were willing to be killed."32

Most of the British officers joined hands with Nizam's Government to create panic to Hindus in Hyderabad. They worked as pro-Pakistan and anti-Hindu Officers. R.S. Shukla has made this point clear in this Enclosure to the Letter dt. 20, October 1947 to Sardar Patel. 33

The Nizam's Government was not only receiving arms from Pakistan but also sending arms to Muslims of other places in India. This was proved from a telephonic conversation between Nizam's House in Delhi and Col. Ali Mohd. of the Hyderabad Army in Hyderabad on 1st November 1947 which was intercepted by the Government of India. 34

32. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.332.
34. Ibid., pp.121-122 for an interesting text of the conversation written in a letter by Patel to Jawaharlal dt. 5th November 1947.
The organisation of Razakars was growing stronger every day. In June their strength was thirty thousand; in July it rose to one lakh and subsequently to two lakhs. They terrorised the Hindus.

It is most unfortunate that the Indian Government could not supply sufficient troops, arms, ammunition, money and even food to the existing army in Hyderabad. O.P. Ramaswamy Reddy, threatened the Indian Government that he would have to resign from his office if sufficient arms, ammunitions and food were not supplied in time. He wrote to Sardar on 10th January 1948; "We have already recruited 6,000 people and they are all keeping idle and not able to receive any training because of lack of arms... twenty thousand of our regular police force are also without rifles... what we want is troops immediately and arms and ammunition and food. If even this letter does not evoke any reply, I am afraid, I will have to give up my office rather than be a helpless spectator... 35

This was a clear indication that the Indian Union was, probably facing financial crisis at this time. Even Sardar could not write to him the difficulties faced by the Indian Union, though he was willing to tell them in person. Therefore, it was certain that the Indian Government was having some difficulty—probably financial—in not employing sufficient troops and not purchasing sufficient arms and ammunition.

When the situation became critical, Sardar took direct charge of the negotiations with Hyderabad. Razakars were acting as an independent army. ElEdroos, the Chief of the Hyderabad Army requested the Nizam to place the Razakars under his control. But the Nizam was unable to do so. The friction between the Army and the Razakars grew. On July 15, Sardar declared, "Many, have asked me what is going to happen to Hyderabad. They forget that when I spoke at Junagadh, I said openly that if Hyderabad did not behave properly, it would have to go the way that Junagadh went. Those words still stand and I stand by those words." 37


The Nizam adopted a strong anti-Hindu policy. He infused communal feelings which resulted in communal movements. A 'ghazal' composed by the Nizam and published on 25th February 1948 throws much light on his anti-Hindu attitude. His 'ghazal' reads as follows:

"Band naqas hua sun ke nidaye takbir; zalzala əhigaya Rishtăe sunnăr pe bhi." The English rendering of these lines is as follows: "Silenced has become the (Hindu) Conch after hearing the voice of the (Islamic) Kalma. An earthquake has overtaken the sacred thread."38

The Communists also joined hands with the Razakars in creating disorder, anarchy, chaos and confusion. In the beginning, they had infiltrated into the Congress and had acquired a strong hold in Nalgonda and Warrangal districts of Hyderabad. In 1947, Nehru was called a stooge of Imperialism and the Communists, then joined the Razakars in their anti-Nehru campaign. The 'Communist Crimes in Hyderabad', a report issued by the Hyderabad Government relating to this period summarises the

position as follows:

"From the 15th August, 1946 to 13th September 1948, they brutally murdered nearly 2,000 persons, attacked 22 police outposts, seized and destroyed villages records, manhandled a large number of village officials, burnt 'chadris' and customs outposts, captured 230 guns, looted or destroyed paddy and robbed cash and jewellery worth more than a million rupees. They attempted large-scale disruption of communications and lines of supply and transport and steadily and systematically adopted the technique of guerrilla fighting with the arms and resources at their disposal."39

The nature of the atrocities committed by the Communists is illustrated by few typical instances:

"More than 500 armed Communists raided the village Pedavid ... murdered ten villagers including women and children and severely injured ten others. Seventy houses had been set fire to, all of them were gutted and children were thrown into the fire... Sixteen people, including a woman were kidnapped by Communists... The men were murdered and their bodies set on fire... A party of twenty-five Communists entered the village Dharnipahad at night, caught hold of an aged Muslim woman, took her to the jungle and speared her to death."40

40. Ibid., pp.128-129.
In the border districts, the atrocities of Razakars were on the increase. It was said that no non-Muslim woman could come into the street without being molested by Razakars.

To all these inhuman atrocities and havoccs of the Razakars on the one side and the Communists on the other, the Nizam remained a silent spectator.

The Hyderabad Government was equipping itself with arms and ammunitions to face the conflict with India which had become inevitable. The State-army was increased to 42,000 and of the Razakars to two lakhs. Indian securities worth 20 Crores were encashed by the Hyderabad Government.

On 17th August, 1948, the Nizam appealed to the U.N.O. to come to his help. But his request was not heeded. The Nizam accused India of violation of the Standstill Agreement and considered it as a direct attack of the sovereignty of the Hyderabad State.

The Police Action and the Accession of Hyderabad:

Although the Nizam committed all such grave mistakes and the people induced Patel to take serious action against Hyderabad Government, he desired to give a long rope and preferred to settle it amicably. Mountbatten was also keen on solving the problem. Once it seemed that the problem had almost reached the stage of settlement. Sir Walter Monckton visited Delhi in June 1948 with terms of settlement approved by Prime Minister Laik Ali and Kasim Razvi. The terms were such that even Walter was sure that they would be rejected by India. But he considered it as his duty to present them for their consideration. D.V.Tahamankar writes what followed
"At that time Sardar Patel was recuperating from a heart-attack at DeharaDoon and Mountbatten flew up to bid him farewell; there he showed him the Hyderabad terms which Patel as Monckton had feared, rejected out of hand as quite unacceptable. However, at the end of the visit Patel said that India owed Mountbatten such a deep debt that he would give him anything he would like as a token of India's gratitude, Mountbatten asked if this was a promise and on receiving the old man's word said all he wanted as a token was that Patel should initial the terms. Silence fell on their conversation; Patel appeared to be weighing the terms and his promise. The sense of honour triumphed and with some hesitation he initialled the draft. Mountbatten was surprised at this magnanimous gesture and said to Patel, 'History will record that you have done the right things for India.'

When Sir Walter presented this initialled terms to the Nizam, he straight away rejected his own terms. This was most paradoxical, ungentlemanly and ludicrous on the part of the Nizam. He should have behaved himself like a statesman by accepting his own terms. Sardar Patel acted like a perfect statesman when he agreed to Monckton's draft.

Mountbatten and Monckton were utterly disappointed by this perfidious and unscrupulous act of the Nizam. On the eve of leaving India on June 21, 1948, Mountbatten said to K.M. Munshi at Delhi Airport, "Munshi I had many jolts in my life. But never have I received such a shock as was given me by these people of Hyderabad." 

After the departure of Mountbatten on June 21, 1948, Patel became the master of the situation. The Nizam wanted to reopen the settlement made by Mountbatten and sought clarifications on four points but Patel bluntly replied that the 'Settlement has gone to England'.

Even the younger son of the Nizam, Prince Muazam Jah was disgusted of the policies adopted and blunders committed by his father. Once, he decided to leave Hyderabad and stay comfortably in the Indian Union. He brings out briefly and effectively the blunders committed by his father. He writes :

"Monckton was our friend, and he left you in disgust. Lord Mountbatten was Hyderabad's best friend; you drove him into hostility. Mr. Munshi came here as a friend; I know him since the days of Sir Akbar Hydaari."

He would have been of great use, but you have turned him into an enemy. I know Pandit Jawaharlal also very well, and you also made him an enemy. If you make peace with Indian Union, the people of Hyderabad will be happy... Hyderabad will be saved and the Asafja dynasty will continue.44

Some of the Ministers were also disappointed and disgusted of the anarchical and tyrannical administration of the Nizam. J.V. Joshi, a State Minister resigned. His letter of resignation exposes the condition of administration. He writes:

"A complete reign of terror prevails in Parbhani and Nanded districts. I have seen in Loha a scene of devastation which brought tears to my eyes—Brahmins were killed and their eyes were taken out. Women had been raped, houses had been burnt down in large numbers. My heart wrung in anguish... under the circumstances, I cannot continue to lend my name to a Government which is powerless to prevent these heart-rending atrocities which I have seen with my own eyes."45

44. Ibid., p.187.
45. V.P. Menon, op. cit., p.353. R.G. Joshi, the District Magistrate, Ahmedabad, in his letter to the Secretary to the Government, Home Department, Bombay, dated 20th August 1948 gives a vivid picture regarding rapes, loot, corruption of Razakars and officers which were rampant in 14 villages of two districts, Bid and Aurangabad. The interesting text of the letter is found in Durga Das, op. cit., pp.227-229.
Describing the nature of the fight between the Hindus and Muslims in Hyderabad, W.G. Joshi, a Congress leader of Amraoti, Behar writes, "It is not a Hindu-Muslim struggle. It is a fight between freedom and slavery - a fight between democracy and autocracy."\(^{46}\)

Pakistan was making large-scale preparations for helping Hyderabad with arms and ammunitions. It recruited half a million soldiers.\(^{47}\)

The Government of India was confronted with a critical situation. The people started asking 'How long will Government tolerate the atrocious conduct of Razvi and his Razakar hooligans'? Patel was also much worried and was convinced that the situation in Hyderabad warranted drastic action.

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47. *Ibid.*, pp.219-228 for an interesting details of Pakistan's preparation to help Hyderabad, see, the text of the 'Enclosure' to the letter from Sardar Patel to Baldev Singh, Defence Minister, Government of India, dated 25th June 1948.
Sardar Patel in his letter to N.V. Gadgil, Minister for Works, Mines and Power, Government of India, dated 21st June 1948 wrote:

"I am rather worried about Hyderabad. This is the time when we should take firm and definite action. There should be no vacillation; and the more public the action is the greater effect it will have on the morale of our people both here and in Hyderabad and will convince our opponents that we mean business... There should be no lack of definiteness of strength about our actions. If, even now, we relax, we shall not only be doing a disservice to the country, but would be digging our own grave... We should also put our military in a state of preparedness for all eventualities." 48

Sardar Patel consulted the Defence Ministry which said that the military action against Hyderabad would not take more than three weeks. Sardar Patel's estimate was less than ten days, but actually, it was all over in less than a week. Nehru hesitated, 'Perhaps he was afraid of his image abroad might be tarnished if force was used." 49 But, Patel decided to handle the affairs on his own. At this time, the Sardar was ailing and had


to go to Dehradun for rest, but still he was in almost daily touch with his ministry. At the time of taking action, he returned to Delhi to resume full charge of the Hyderabad crisis.

On September 9, 1948, it was finally decided to launch military operations on September 13, 1948. Jinnah expired on September 12th and the British Commander-in-Chief, General Bucher advised Patel to postpone the operation. But Patel wanted that the 'Operation Polo' should be started as scheduled on September 13.

Some criticise Sardar Patel for not adhering to the democratic way, because, he did not bring this matter to the Cabinet Meeting for discussion. But, it is a wrong impression. Sardar did bring the 'proposed police action' before the Cabinet Meeting called by C. Rajagopalachari. Nehru and others agreed to all that was being done by Patel and the Defence Ministry. Thus, it is clear that Patel took military action against Hyderabad with the necessary sanction of the Cabinet. Therefore, he was not undemocratic in his way.
Major-General J.N. Choudhari and Lt. General Maharaj
Shri Rajendra Sinhji were in charge of the 'Operation Polo'. Naldurg, which was considered impregnable, surrendered in a few hours. There was some hard resistance on the first and second days. After this, the resistance met and virtually collapsed. The Hyderabad Army lacked discipline, courage and fighting spirit. It was no match to the disciplined and heroic Indian Army. The stuffed and furious Razakars met with highest casualties and ran away.

As pointed out already, on the eve of 'Operation Polo', Jinnah had died and Sardar Patel was advised to postpone it for at least two days. Had that been done, it "might well be that the operation would have lasted much longer. On the very first day the advancing Indian troops captured Lieutenant T.T. Moore, an ex-British Army Commando and Special Services Officer, who had been employed by the Hyderabad army since August 1947 and who was driving in a loaded jeep in the direction of Naldurg. It was discovered that his jeep was full of explosives, while his personal papers showed that he had been given the responsibility for arranging
demolitions. He had been sent at top speed from the Hyderabad Army Head-quarters to demolish the Naldurg and other bridges. He had been told that the Indian Army advance would take place on 15th September. If the Indian Army had marched in on the 15th and not on the 13th, they would have found all the important bridges blown up. Nature would have added to their difficulties, for with the rains setting in, the heavy army vehicles would have been bogged." This was how Sardar Patel was foreseeing the happenings with almost an intuitive eye, a rare quality possessed by him.

The police action lasted only 108 hours and Hyderabad was peacefully handed over to the Indian Army on the 17th September 1948. The Razakars shed their beards and uniforms. Major General Choudhari took charge of Hyderabad Government as Military Governor on 18th September 1948. The people welcomed the Indian army and rendered all possible help to end the reign of terror of the Razakars and the Communists. Kasim Razvi was arrested on 19th September in his brother-in-law's house which was at some distance from Hyderabad city. In all, 15,654

50. V.P.Menon, op.cit., p.359.
Razakhars were detailed in jail during the police action and were released afterwards. The members of Laik Ali Ministry were placed under house arrest. The only anxiety of the Nizam was the safety of his hoarded wealth and when this was assured to him, he gave all powers to the Commander of the Indian Army. On 23rd November, the Nizam accepted the constitution of India for the State of Hyderabad. The Hyderabad case was withdrawn from the Security Council on 23rd September at the behest of the Nizam.

Many people had anticipated the Communal incidents in many places of India during the time of police action. But, it was surprising that 'there was not a single communal incident in the whole length and breadth of India throughout the time of the operation... There was a universal jubilation at the swift and successful ending of the Hyderabad episode..."51 This illustrates that Nizam was not a popular figure. He was after power and wealth only. He had encouraged and strengthened the Razakars who were feared even by the Muslim nobility.

51. Ibid., p.360.
The highest and the most significant compliment was given by Sir Walter Monckton. He writes:

"I want to tell you how relieved I am that the action which you were eventually driven to take did not result in large-scale communal troubles. I know how anxious you were not to take the action at all and how hard you struggled to avoid it. I honestly believe that moderate world opinion shared your view rather than the other. Still, however that may be, everyone who wants to see a peaceful and prosperous India will rejoice, as I do that episode is quietly finished."52

This gives us an idea as to how Sardar tried to solve the Hyderabad problem peacefully and how he was forced by circumstance to take police-action which was of course, universally acclaimed.

His Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad who had not gone to the Begumpet Airport to welcome Prime Minister Nehru when he visited Hyderabad a few weeks earlier, went personally to the Hyderabad Airport when Sardar Patel arrived by plane on October 8, 1950.

52. Durga Das, op.cit., pp.LV-LVI
The Nizam who was responsible for the untold miseries and suffering of the Hindus was wondering as to how this 'Iron man of India' would treat him. But, Patel showed him the generosity and magnanimity and told him to forget the past and he would be treated with dignity and honour if he would remain loyal to the Indian Union. Patel was not much concerned with the individual (Nizam) whose ambition was to see an independent Islamic State, but with the freedom of the people to run their own government and the accession of Hyderabad with the Indian Union. He had the highest satisfaction that he could achieve it.